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DEMOCRACY

by

D.H. LAWRENCE

I

THE AVERAGE

Whitman gives two laws or principles for the establishment of Democracy. We may epitomize them as: (1) The Law of the Average; (2) The Principle of Individualism, or Personalism, or Identity.

The Law of the Average is well known to us. Upon this law rests all the vague dissertation concerning equality and social perfection. Rights of Man, Equality of Man, Social Perfectability of Man: all these sweet abstractions, once so inspiring, rest upon the fatal little hypothesis of the Average.

What is the Average? As we are well aware, there is no such animal. It is a pure abstraction. It is the reduction of the human being to a mathematical unit. Every human being numbers one, one single unit. That is the grand proposition of the Average.

Let us further examine this mysterious One, this Unit, this Average; let us examine it corporeally. The average human being: put him on the table, the little

monster, and let us see what his works are like. He is just a little monster. He has two legs, two eyes, one nose --- all exact. He has a stomach and a penis. He is a little organism. He is one very complicated organ, a unit, an identity.

What is he for? If he's an organ, he must have a purpose. If he's an organism, he must have a purpose. The question is premature, yet it shall be answered. Since he has a mouth, he is made for eating. Since he has feet, he is made for walking. Since he has a penis, he is made for reproducing his species. And so on, and so on.

What a loathsome little beast he is, this Average, this Unit, this Homunculus. Yet he has his purposes. He is useful to measure by. That's the purpose of all averages. An average is not invented to be an Archetype. What a really comical mistake we have made about him. He is invented to serve as a standard in the business of comparison. He is invented to serve as a standard, just like any other standard, like the metre, or the gramme, or the English pound sterling. That's what he is for --- nothing else. He was never intended to be worshipped. What comical, fetish-smitten savages we are.

We use a foot-rule to tell us how big our house is. We don't proceed to say that the foot-rule is the sceptre which sways the earth and all the stars. Yet we have said as much of this little standardized invention of ours, the Average Man, the man-in-the-street. We have made prime fools of ourselves.

Now let us pull the gilt off the image, and see exactly what it is, and what we want it for. It is a mathematical quantity, like the metre or the foot-rule: a purely arbitrary institution of the human mind. Let us be quite clear about that.

But the human mind has invented the institution for its own purposes. Granted. What are the purposes? Merely for the comparing of one *living* man with another *living* man, in case of necessity: just as money is merely a contrivance for comparing a leg of mutton with a volume of Keats' poems. The money in itself is nothing. It is simply the arbitrary static measure for human desires. We mistake the measure for the thing it measures, and proceed to base our desires on money. It is nonsensical materialism.

Now for the Average Man himself. He is five-feet-six-inches high: and therefore you, John, will take an over-size pair of trousers, reach-me-downs; and you, François, mon cher, will take an under-size. The Average Man also has a mouth and a stomach, which consume two pounds of bread and six ounces of meat per day: and therefore you, Fritz, exceed the normal consumption of food, while you, dear Emily, consume less than your share. The Average Man has also a penis; and therefore all of you, François, Fritz, John, and Giacomo, you may begin begetting children at the average age, let us say, of twenty-five.

The Average Man is somehow very unsatisfactory. He is not sufficiently worked out. It is astonishing that we have not perfected him before. But this is because

we have mixed the issues. How could we scientifically establish the Average, whilst he had to stand draped upon a pedestal, as an Ideal? Haul him down at once. He is no Ideal. He is just a Standard, the creature on whom Standard suits and Standard boots are fitted, to whose stomach Standard bread is adjusted, and for whose eyes the Standard Lamps are lighted, the Standard Oil Company is busy refining its gallons. He comes under the Government Weights and Measures Act.

Perfect him quickly: the Average, the Normal, the Man-in-the-street. He is so many inches high, broad, deep; he weighs so many pounds. He must eat so much, and sleep so much, and work so much, and play so much, and love so much, and think so much, and argue so much, and read so many newspapers, and have so children. Somebody, quick, --- some Professor of Social Economy --- draw us up a perfect Average, and let us have him before the middle of next week. He is urgently required at the moment.

This is all your Man-in-the-street amounts to: this tailor's dummy of an average. He is the image and effigy of all your equality. Men are not equal, and never were, and never will be, save by the arbitrary determination of some ridiculous human Ideal. But still, in the normal course of things, all men *do* have two eyes and one nose and a stomach and a penis. In the teeth of all opposition we assert it. In the normal course of things, all men *do* hunger and thirst and sleep and laugh and feel miserable and fall in love and ache for coition and

ache to escape from the woman again. And the Average Man just represents what all men need and desire, physically, functionally, materially, and socially. *Materially* need: that's the point. The Average Man is the standard of material need in the human being.

Please keep out all Spiritual and Mystical needs. They have nothing to do with the Average. You cannot Average such things. As far as the stomach goes, it is not really true that one man's meat is another man's poison. No. The law of the Average holds good for the stomach. All young mammals suck milk, without exception. But in the free, spontaneous self, one man's meat is truly another man's poison. And therefore you *can't* draw any average. You can't *have* an average: unless you are going to poison everybody.

Now we will settle for ever the Equality of Man, and the Rights of Man. Society means people living together. People *must* live together. And to live together, they must have some Standard, some *Material* Standard. This is where the Average comes in. And this is where Socialism and Modern Democracy come in. For Democracy and Socialism rest upon the Equality of Man, which is the Average. And this is sound enough, so long as the Average represents the real basic material needs of mankind: basic material needs: we insist and insist again. For Society, or Democracy, or any Political State or Community exists not for the sake of the individual, nor should ever exist for the sake of the individual, but simply to establish the Average, in order to make living together possible: that is, to make proper facilities

for every man's clothing, feeding, housing himself, working, sleeping, mating, playing, according to his necessity as a common unit, an average. Everything beyond that common necessity depends on himself alone.

The proper adjustment of material means of existence: for this the State exists, but for nothing further. The State is a dead ideal. *Nation* is a dead ideal. Democracy and Socialism are dead ideals. They are one and all just *contrivances* for the supplying of the lowest material needs of a people. They are just vast hotels, or hostels, where every guest does some scrap of the business of the day's routine --- if it's only lounging gracefully to give the appearance of ease --- and for this contribution gets his suitable accommodation. England, France, Germany --- these great nations, they have no vital meaning any more, except as great Food Committees and Housing Committees for a throng of people whose material tastes are somewhat in accord. No doubt they *had* other meanings. No doubt the French individuals of the seventeenth century still felt themselves gloriously expressed in stone, in Versailles. But man loses more and more his faculty for collective self-expression. Nay, the great development in collective expression in mankind has been a progress towards the possibility of purely individual expression. The highest Collectivity has for its true goal the purest individualism, pure individual spontaneity. But once more we have mistaken the means for the end: so that Presidents, those representatives of the collected masses, instead

of being accounted the chief machine-section of society, which they are, are revered as ideal beings. The thing to do is not to raise the idea of Nation, or even of Internationalism, higher. The need is to take away every scrap of ideal drapery from nationalism and from internationalism, to show it all as a material contrivance for housing and feeding and conveying innumerable people. The housing and feeding, the method of conveyance and the rules of the road may be as different as you please - - - just as the methods of one great business house, and even of one hotel, are different from those of another. But that is all it is. Man no longer expresses himself in his form of goverment, and his President is strictly only his superlative butler. This is the true course of evolution: the great collective activities are at last merely auxiliary to the purely individual activities. Business houses may be magnificent, but there is nothing divine in it. This is why the Kaiser sounded so foolish. He was really only the head of a very great business concern. His God was the most intolerable part of his stock-in-trade. Genuine business houses may quarrel and compete, but they don't go to war. Why? Because they are not ideal concerns. They are just practical material concerns. It is only Ideal concerns which go to war, and slaughter indiscriminately with a feeling of exalted righteousness. But when a business concern masquerades as an ideal concern, and behaves in this fashion, it is really unbearable.

There are two things to do. Strip off at once all the ideal drapery from nationality, from nations, peoples,

states, empires, and even from Internationalism and Leagues of Nations. Leagues of Nations should be just flatly and simply committees where representatives of the various business houses, so-called Nations, meet and consult. Consultations, board-meetings of the State business men: no more. *Representatives of Peoples* --- who can represent me? --- I am myself. I don't intend anybody to represent me.

You, you Cabinet Minister --- what are you? You are the arch-grocer, the super-hotel-manager, the foreman over the ships and railways. What else are you? You are the super-tradesman, same paunch, same ingratiating manner, same everything. Governments, what are they? Just board-meetings of big business men. Very useful, too --- very thankful we are that somebody *will* look after this business. But Ideal! An Ideal Government? What nonsense. We might as well talk of an Ideal Cook's Tourist Agency, or an Ideal Achille Serre Cleaners and Dyers. Even the ideal Ford of America is only an ideal *average* motor-car. His employees are not spontaneous, nonchalant human beings, à la Whitman. They are just well-tested, well-oiled sections of the Ford automobile.

Politics --- what are they? Just another, extra-large, commercial wrangle over buying and selling --- nothing else. Very good to have the wrangle. Let us have the buying and selling well done. But *ideal!* Politics *ideal! Political Idealists!* What rank gewgaw and nonsense! We have just enough sense not to talk about Ideal Selfridges or Ideal Krupps or Ideal Heidsiecks.

Then let us have enough sense to drop the ideal of England or Europe or anywhere else. Let us be men and women, and keep our house in order. But let us pose no longer as houses, or as England, or as housemaids, or democrats.

Pull the ideal drapery off Governments, States, Nations, and Inter-nations. Show them for what they are: big business concerns for manufacturing and retailing Standard goods. Put up a statue of the Average Man, something like those abominable statues of men in woolen underwear which surmount a shop at the corner of Oxford Street and Tottenham Court Road. Let your statue be grotesque: in fact, borrow those ignominious statues of men in pants and vests: the fat one for Germany, the thin one for England, the middling one for France, the gaunt one for America. Point to these statues, which guard the entrance to the house of Commons, to the Chamber, to the Senate, to the Reichstag --- and let every Prime Minister and President know the quick of his own ignominy. Let every bursting politican see himself in his commercial pants. Let every senatorial idealist and saviour of mankind be reminded that his office depends on the quality of the underwear he supplies to the State. Let every fiery and rhetorical Deputy remember that he is only held together by his patent suspenders.

And then, when the people of the world have finally got over the state of giddy idealizing of governments, nations, inter-nations, politics, democracies, empires, and so forth; when they really understand that their

collective activities are only cook-housemaid to their sheer individual activities; when they at last calmly accept a business concern for what it is; then, at last, we may actually see free men in the streets.

II

IDENTITY

Let us repeat that Whitman establishes the true Democracy on two bases:

(1) The Average; (2) Individualism, Personalism, or Identity.

The Average is much easier to settle and define than is Individualism or Identity. The Average is the same as the Man-in-the-street, the unit of Humanity. This unit is in the first place just an abstraction, an invention of the human mind. In the first place, the Man-in-the-street is no more than an abstract idea. But in the second place, by application to Tom, Dick, and Harry, he becomes a substantial, material, functioning unit. This is how the ideal world is created. It is invented exactly as man invents machinery. First there is an idea; then the idea is substantiated, the inventor fabricates his machine; and then he proceeds to worship his fabrication, and himself as mouthpiece of the Logos. This is how the world, the universe, was invented from the Logos: exactly as man has invented machinery and the whole ideal of humanity. The vital universe was never created from any Logos; but the

ideal universe of man was certainly so invented. Man's overweening mind uttered the Word, and the Word was God. So that the world today exists as a flesh-and-blood-and-iron substantiation of this uttered world. This is all the trouble: that the invented *ideal* world of man is superimposed upon living men and women, and men and women are thus turned into abstracted, functioning, mechanical units. This is all the great ideal of Humanity amounts to: an aggregation of ideally functioning units; never a man or woman possible.

Ideals, all ideals and every ideal, are a trick of the devil. They are a superimposition of the abstracted, automatic, invented universe of man upon the spontaneous creative universe. So much for the Average, the Man-in-the-street, and the great ideal of Humanity: all a little trick men have played on us. But quite a useful little trick --- so long as we merely use it as one uses the trick of making cakes or pies or bread, just for feeding purposes, and suchlike.

Let us leave the Average, and look at the second basis of democracy. With the Average we settle the cooking, eating, sleeping, housing, mating, and clothing problem. But Whitman insisted on exalting his Democracy; he would not quite leave it on the cooking-eating-mating level. We cook to eat, we eat to sleep, we sleep to build houses, we build houses in order to beget and bear children in safety, we bear children in order to clothe them, we clothe them in order that they may start the old cycle over again, cook and eat and sleep and house and mate and clothe, and so on *ad infinitum*.

That is the Average. It is the business of a government to superintend it.

But Whitman insisted on raising Democracy above government, or even above public service or humanity or love of one's neighbor. Heaven knows what his Democracy is --- but something as yet unattained. It is something beyond governments and even Ideals. It must be beyond Ideals, because it has never yet been stated. As an idea it doesn't yet exist. Even Whitman, with all his reiteration, got no further than *hinting:* and frightfully bad hints, many of them.

We've heard the Average hint --- enough of that. Now for Individualism, Personalism, and Identity. We catch hold of the tail of the hint, and proceed with Identity.

What has Identity got to do with Democracy? It can't have anything to do with politics and governments. It can't much affect one's love for one's neighbor, or for humanity. Yet, stay --- it can. Whitman says there is One Identity in all things. It is only the old dogma. All things emanate from the Supreme Being. All things, being all emanations from the Supreme Being, have One Identity.

Very nice. But we don't like the look of this Supreme Being. It is too much like the Man-in-the-street. This Supreme Being, this Anima Mundi, this Logos was surely just invented to suit the human needs. It is surely the magnified Average, abstracted from men, and then clapped on to them again, like identity-medals on wretched khaki soldiers. But instead of a magnified

average-function-unit, we have a magnified unit of Consciousness, or Spirit.

Like the Average, this One Identity is useful enough, if we use it aright. It is not a matter of provisioning the body, this time, but of provisioning the spirit, the consciousness. We are all one, and therefore every bit partakes of all the rest. That is, the Whole is inherent in every fragment. That is, every human consciousness has the same intrinsic value as every other human consciousness, because each is an essential part of the Great Consciousness. This is the One Identity which identifies us all.

It is very nice, theoretically. And it is a very great stimulus to universal comprehension; it leads us all to want to know everything; it even tempts us all to imagine we know everything beforehand, and need make no effort. It is the subtlest means of extending the consciousness. But when you have extended your consciousness, even to infinity, what then? Do you really become God? When in your understanding you embrace everything, then surely you are divine? But no! With a nasty bump you have come down and realize that, in spite of your infinite comprehension, you are not really any other than you were before: not a bit more divine or superhuman or enlarged. Your *consciousness* is not *you:* that is the sad lesson you learn in your superhuman flight of infinite understanding.

This big bump of falling out of the infinite back into your own old self leads you to suspect that the One Identity is not *the* identity. There is another, little sort

of identity, which you can't get away from, except by breaking your neck. The One Identity is very like the Average. It is what you are when you aren't yourself. It is what you are when you imagine you're something hugely big --- the Infinite, for example. And the consciousness is really capable of attaining infinity. But there you are! Your consciousness has to fly back to the old tree, to peck the old apples, and sleep under the leaves. It was all only an excursion. It was wearing a magic cap. You yourself invented the cap, and then puffed up your head to fit it. But a swelled head at last begins to ache, and you realize it's only your own old chump after all. All the extended consciousness that ranges the infinite heavens must sleep under the thatch of your hair at night: and you are only you; and your *spirit* is only a bird in your tree, that flies, and then settles, whistles, and then is silent.

Man is a queer beast. He spends dozens of centuries puffing himself up and drawing himself in, and at last he has to be content to be just his own size, neither infinitely big nor infinitely little. Man is tragi-comical. His insatiable desire to be *everything* has made him clean forget that he might be himself. To be everything --- to be everything: the history of mankind is only a history of this insane craving in man. You can magnify yourself into a Jehovah and a huge Egyptian king-god: or you can reverse the spy-glass, and dwindle yourself away into a speck, lost in the Infinite of Love, as the later great races have done. But still you'll only be chasing the one mad reward, the reward of infinity:

which, when you've got it, bursts like a bubble in your hand, and leaves you looking at your own fingers. Well, and what's wrong with your own fingers?

It is a bubble, the One Identity. But, chasing it, man gets his education. It is his education process, the chance of the All, the extension of the consciousness. He *learns* everything: except the last lesson of all, which he can't learn till the bubble has burst in his fingers.

The last lesson? --- Ah, the lesson of his own fingers: himself: the little identity; little, but real. Better, far better, to be oneself than to be any bursting Infinite, or swollen One Identity.

It is a radical passion in man, however, the passion to include *everything* in himself, grasp it all. There are two ways of gratifying this passion. The first is Alexander's way, the way of power, power over the material universe. This is what the alchemists and magicians sought. This is what Satan offered Jesus, in the Temptations: power, mystic and actual, over the material world. And power, we know, is a bubble: a platitudinous bubble.

But Jesus chose the other way: not to *have* all, but to *be* all. Not to *grasp* everything into supreme possession: but to *be* everything, through supreme acceptance. It is the same thing, at the very last. The king-god and the crucified-God hold the same bubble in their hands: the bubble of the All, the Infinite. The king-god extends the dominion of his will and consciousness over all things: the crucified identifies his will and

consciousness with all things. But the submission of love is at last a process of pure materialism, like the supreme extension of power. Up to a certain point, both in mastering, which is power, and in submitting, which is love, the soul *learns* and fulfills itself. Beyond a certain point, it merely collapses from its centrality and lapses out into the material chain of cause and effect. The tyranny of Power is no worse than the tyranny of No-power. Government by the highest is no more fatal than government by the lowest. Let the Average govern, let him be called super-butler, let us have a faint but tolerant contempt for him. But let us keep our very self integral, greater than any having or knowing, centrally alive and quick.

The last lesson: the myriad, mysterious identities, no one of which can *comprehend* another. They can only exist side by side, as stars do. The lesson of lessons: not in any oneness with the rest of things do we have our pure being: but in clean, fine singleness. Oneness, and collectiveness, these are our lesser states, inferior: our impurity. They are mere states of consciousness and of having.

It is all very well to talk about a Supreme Being, an Anima Mundi, an Oversoul, an Infinite: but it is all just human invention. Come down to actuality. Where do you see being? --- In individual men and women. Where do you find an Anima? --- In living individual creatures. Where would you look for a soul? --- In a man, in an animal, in a tree or flower. And all the rest, about Supreme Beings and Anima Mundis and Over-

souls, is just abstractions. Show me the very animal! --- You can't. It is merely a trick of the human will, trying to get power over everything, and therefore making the wish father of the thought. The cart foals the horse, and there you are: a Logos, a Supreme Being, a What-not.

But there are two sorts of individual identity. Every factory-made pitcher has its own little identity, resulting from a certain mechanical combination of Matter with Forces. These are the material identities. They sum up to the material Infinite.

The true identity, however, is the identity of the living self. If we look for God, let us look in the bush where he sings. That is, in living creatures. Every living creature is single in itself, a *ne plus ultra* of creative reality, *fons et origo*, of creative manifestaton. Why go further? Why begin to abstract and generalize and include? There you have it. Every single living creature is a single creative unit, a unique, incommutable self. Primarily, in its own spontaneous reality, it knows no law. It is a law unto itself. Secondarily, in its material reality, it submits to all the laws of the material universe. But the primal, spontaneous self in any creature has ascendance, truly, over the material laws of the universe; it uses these laws and converts them in the mystery of creation.

This then is the true identity: the inscrutable, single self, the little unfathomable well-head that bubbles forth into being and doing. We cannot analyse it. We can only know it is there. It is not by any means

a Logos. It precedes any knowing. It is the fountain-head of everything: the quick of the self.

Not people melted into a oneness: that is not the new Democracy. But people released into their single, starry identity, each one distinct and incommutable. This will never be an ideal; for of the living self you cannot make an idea, just as you have not been able to turn the individual "soul" into an idea. Both are impossible to idealize. An idea is an abstraction from reality, a generalization. And you can't generalize the incommutable.

So the Whitman One Identity, the *En-Masse*, is a horrible nullification of true identity and being. At the best, our *en masse* activities can be but servile, serving the free soul. At the worst, they are sheer self-destruction. Let us put them in their place. Let us get over our rage of social activity, public being, universal self-estimation, republicanism, bolshevism, socialism, empire --- all these mad manifestations of *En Masse* and One Identity. They are all self-betrayed. Let our Democracy be in the singleness of the clear, clean self, and let our *En Masse* be no more than an arrangement for the liberty of this self. Let us drop looking after our neighbor. It only robs him of his chance of looking after himself. Which is robbing him of his freedom, with a vengeance.

III

PERSONALITY

One's-self I sing, a simple separate person,
Yet utter the word Democratic, the word En-Masse.

Such are the opening words of *Leaves of Grass*. It is Whitman's whole *motif*, the key to all his Democracy. First and last he sings of "the great pride of man in himself." First and last he is Chanter of Personality. If it is not Personality, it is Identity; and if not Identity, it is the individual: and along with these, Democracy and *En Masse*.

In Whitman, at all times, the true and the false are so near, so interchangeable, that we are almost inevitably left with divided feelings. The Average, one of his greatest idols, we flatly refuse to worship. Again, when we come to do real reverence to identity, we never know whether we shall be taking off our hats to that great mystery, the unique individual self, distinct and primal in every separate man, or whether we shall be saluting that old great idol of the past, the Supreme One which swallows up all true identity.

And now for Personality. What meaning does "person" really carry? A *person* is given in the dictionary as an *individual human being*. But surely the words *person* and *individual* suggest very different things. It is not at all the same to have personality as to have individuality, though you may not be able to define the difference.

And the distinction between a person and a human being is perhaps even greater. Some "persons" hardly seem like human beings at all.

The derivation this time helps. *Persona*, in Latin, is a player's mask, or a character in a play: and perhaps the word is cognate with *sonare*, to sound. An *individual* is that which is not divided or not dividable. A *being* we shall not attempt to define, because it is indefinable.

So now, there must be a radical difference between something which was originally a player's mask, or a transmitted sound, and something which means "the undivided." The old meaning lingers in *person*, and is almost obvious in *personality*. A person is a human being *as he appears to others;* and personality is that which is transmitted from the person to his audience: the transmissible effect of a man.

A good actor can assume a personality; he can never assume an individuality. Either he has his own, or none. So that personality is something much more superficial, or at least more volatile than individuality. This volatile quality is the one we must examine.

Let us take a sentence from an American novel: "My *ego* had played a trick on me, and made me think I wanted babies, when I only wanted the man." This is a perfectly straight and lucid statement. But what is the difference between the authoress's *ego* and her *me?* The *ego* is obviously a sort of second self, which she carries about with her. It is her body of accepted consciousness, which she has inherited more or less ready-made from her father and grandfathers. This

secondary self is very pernicious, dictating to her issues which are quite false to her true, deeper, spontaneous self, her creative identity.

Nothing in the world is more pernicious than the *ego* or spurious self, the conscious entity with which every individual is saddled. He receives it almost *en bloc* from the preceding generation, and spends the rest of his life trying to drag his spontaneous self from beneath the horrible incubus. And the most fatal part of the incubus, by far, is the dead, leaden weight of handed-on ideals. So that every individual is born with a mill-stone of ideals round his neck, and, whether he knows it or not, either spends his time trying to get his neck free, like a wild animal wrestling with a collar to which a log is fastened; or else he spends his days decorating his mill-stone, his log, with fantastic colours.

And a finely or a fantastically decorated mill-stone is called a personality. Never trust for one moment any individual who has unmistakable *personality*. He is sure to be a life-traitor. His personality is only a sort of actor's mask. It is his self-conscious *ego*, his *ideal* self masquerading and prancing around, showing off. He may not be aware of it. But that makes no matter. He is a painted bug.

The *ideal* self: this is personality. The self that is begotten and born from the *idea*, this is the *ideal* self: a spurious, detestable product. This is man created from his own Logos. This is man born out of his own head. This is the self-conscious ego, the entity of fixed ideas and ideals, prancing and displaying itself like an

actor. And this is personality. This is what makes the American authoress gush about babies. And this gush is her peculiar form of personality, which renders her attractive to the American men, who prefer so much to deal with personalities and *egos*, rather than with real beings: because personalities and *egos*, after all, are quite *reasonable*, which means, they are subject to the laws of cause-and-effect; they are safe and calculable: materialists, units of the material world of Force and Matter.

Your idealist alone is a perfect materialist. This is no paradox. What is the idea, or the ideal, after all? It is only a fixed, static entity, an abstraction, an extraction from the living body of life. Creative life is characterized by spontaneous mutability: it brings forth unknown issues, impossible to preconceive. But an ideal is just a machine which is in process of being built. A man gets the idea for some engine, and proceeds to work it out in steel and copper. In exactly the same way, man gets some ideal of man, and proceeds to work it out in flesh-and-blood, as a fixed, static entity: just as a machine is a static entity, so is the ideal Humanity.

If we want to find the real enemy today, here it is: idealism. If we want to find this enemy incarnate, here he is: a personality. If we want to know the steam which drives this mechanical little incarnation, here it is: love of humanity, the public good.

There have been other ideals than ours, other forms of personality, other sorts of steam. We quite

fail to see what sort of personality Rameses II had, or what sort of steam built the pyramids: chiefly, I suppose, because they are a very great load on the face of the earth.

Is love of humanity the same as real, warm, individual love? Nonsense. It is the moonshine of our warm day, a hateful reflection. Is personality the same as individual being? We know it is a mere mask. Is idealism the same as creation? Rubbish! Idealism is no more than a plan of a marvellous Human Machine, drawn up by the great Draughtsmen-Minds of the past. Give God a pair of compasses, and let the designs be measured and formed. What insufferable nonsense! As if creation proceeded from a pair of compasses. Better say that man is a forked radish, as Carlyle did: it's nearer the mark than this Pair of Compasses business.

You can have life two ways. Either everything is created from the mind, downwards; or else everything proceeds from the creative quick, outwards into exfoliation and blossom. Either a great Mind floats in space: God, the Anima Mundi, the Oversoul, drawing with a pair of compasses and making everything to scale, even emotions and self-conscious effusions; or else creation proceeds from the forever inscrutable quicks of living beings, men, women, animals, plants. The actual living quick itself is alone the creative reality. Once you abstract from this, once you generalize and postulate Universals, you have departed from the creative reality, and entered the realm of static fixity, mechanism, materialism.

Now let us put salt on the tail of that sly old bird of "attractive personality." It isn't a bird at all. It is a self-conscious, self-important, befeathered snail: and salt is good for snails. It is the snail which has eaten off our flowers till none are left. Now let us no longer be taken in by the feathers. Anyhow, put salt on his tail.

No personalities in our Democracy. No ideals either. When still more Personalities come round hawking their pretty ideals, we must be ready to upset their apple-cart. I say, a man's self is a law unto itself: not unto *himself*, mind you. Itself. When a man talks about *himself*, he is talking about his idea of himself; his own ideal self, that fancy little homunculus he has fathered in his brain. When a man is conscious of himself he is trading his own personality.

You can't make an *idea* of the living self: hence it can never become an ideal. Thank heaven for that. There it is, an inscrutable, unfindable, vivid quick, giving us off as a life-issue. It is not *spirit*. Spirit is merely our mental consciousness, a finished essence extracted from our life-being, just as alcohol, spirits of wine, is the material, finished essence extracted from the living grape. The living self is not spirit. You cannot postulate it. How can you postulate that which is *there?* The moon might as well try to hold forth in heaven, postulating the sun. Or a child hanging on to his mother's skirt might as well commence in a long diatribe to postulate his mother's existence, in order to prove his own existence. Which is exactly what man

has been busily doing for two thousand years. What amazing nonsense!

The quick of the self is *there*. You needn't try to get behind it. As leave try to get behind the sun. You needn't try to idealize it, for by so doing you will only slime about with feathers in your tail, a gorgeous be-feathered snail of an *ego* and a personality. You needn't try to show it off to your neighbor: he'll put salt on your tail if you do. And you needn't go on trying to save the living soul of your neighbour. It's hands off. Do you think you are such a God-Almighty bird of paradise that you can grow your neighbour's goose-quills for him on your own loving house-sparrow wings? Every bird must grow his own feathers; you are not the almighty dodo; you've got nobody's wings to feather but your own.

IV

INDIVIDUALISM

It is obvious that Whitman's Democracy is not merely a political system, or a system of government --- or even a social system. It is an attempt to conceive a new way of life, to establish new values. It is a struggle to liberate human beings from the fixed, arbitrary control of ideals, into free spontaneity.

No, the ideal of Oneness, the unification of all mankind into the homogeneous whole, is done away with.

The great *desire* is that each single individual shall be incommutably himself, spontaneous and single, that he not in any way be reduced to a term, a unit of any Whole.

We must discriminate between an ideal and a desire. A desire proceeds from within, from the unknown, spontaneous soul or self. But an ideal is superimposed from above, from the mind; it is a fixed, arbitrary thing, like a machine control. The great lesson is to learn to break all the fixed ideals, to allow the soul's own deep desires to come direct, spontaneous into consciousness. But it is a lesson which will take many æons to learn.

Our life, our being depends upon the incalculable issue from the central Mystery into indefinable *presence*. This sounds in itself an abstraction. But not so. It is rather the perfect absence of abstraction. The central Mystery is no generalized abstraction. It is each man's primal original soul or self, within him. And *presence* is nothing mystic or ghostly. On the contrary. It is the actual man present before us. The fact that an actual man present before us is an inscrutable and incarnate Mystery, untranslatable, this is the fact upon which any great scheme of social life must be based. It is the fact of *otherness*.

Each human self is single, incommutable, and unique. This is its *first* reality. Each self is unique, and therefore incomparable. It is a single well-head of creation, unquestionable: it cannot be compared with another self, another well-head, because, in its prime or creative reality, it can never be comprehended by

any other self.

The living self has one purpose only: to come into its own fullness of being, as a tree comes into full blossom, or a bird into spring beauty, or a tiger into lustre.

But this coming into full, spontaneous being is the most difficult thing of all. Man's nature is balanced between spontaneous creativity and mechanical-material activity. Spontaneous being is subject to no law. But mechanical-material existence is subject to all the laws of the mechanical-physical world. Man has almost half his nature in the material world. His spontaneous nature *just* takes precedence.

The only thing man has to trust to in coming to himself is his desire and his impulse. But both desire and impulse tend to fall into mechanical automatism: to fall from spontaneous reality into dead or material reality. All our education should be a guarding against this fall.

The fall is possible in a two-fold manner. Desires tend to automatize into functional appetites, and impulses tend to automatize into fixed aspirations or ideals. These are the two great temptations of man. Falling into the first temptation, the whole human will pivots on some function, some material activity, which then works the whole being: like an *idee fixe* in the mental consciousness. This automatized, dominant appetite we call a lust: a lust for power, a lust for consuming, a lust for self-abnegation and merging. The second great temptation is the inclination to set up some fixed centre in the

mind, and make the whole soul turn upon this centre. This we call idealism. Instead of the will fixing upon some sensational activity, it fixes upon some aspirational activity, and pivots this activity upon an idea or an ideal. The whole soul streams in the energy of aspiration and turns automatically, like a machine, upon the ideal.

These are the two great temptations of the fall of man, the fall from spontaneous, single, pure being, into what we call materialism or automatism or mechanism of the self. All education must tend against this fall; and all our efforts in all our life must be to preserve the soul free and spontaneous. The whole soul of man must *never* be subjected to one motion or emotion, the life-activity must never be degraded into a fixed activity, there must be *no fixed direction*.

There can be no ideal goal for human life. Any ideal goal means mechanization, materialism, and nullity. There is no pulling open the buds to see what the blossom will be. Leaves must unroll, buds swell and open, and *then* the blossom. And even after that, when the flower dies and the leaves fall, *still* we shall not know. There will be more leaves, more buds, more blossoms: and again, a blossom is an unfolding of the creative unknown. Impossible, utterly impossible to preconceive the unrevealed blossom. You cannot forestall it from the last blossom. We know the flower of today, but the flower of tomorrow is all beyond us. Only in the material-mechanical world can man foresee, foreknow, calculate, and establish laws.

So, we more or less grasp the first term of the new Democracy. We see something of what a man will be unto himself.

Next, what will a man be unto his neighbor? --- Since every individual is, in his first reality, a single, incommutable soul, not to be calculated or defined in terms of any other soul, there can be no establishing of a mathematical ratio. We cannot say that all men are equal. We cannot say A equals B. Nor can we say that men are unequal. We may not declare that A equals B plus C.

Where each thing is unique in itself, there can be no comparison made. One man is neither equal nor unequal to another man. When I stand in the presence of another man, and I am my own pure self, am I aware of the presence of an equal, or of an inferior, or of a superior? I am not. When I stand with another man, who is himself, and when I am truly myself, then I am only aware of a Presence, and of the strange reality of Otherness. There is me, and there is *another being*. That is the first part of the reality. There is no comparing or estimating. There is only this strange recognition of *present otherness*. I may be glad, angry, or sad, because of the presence of the other. But still no comparison enters in. Comparison enters only when one of us departs from his own integral being, and enters the material-mechanical world. Then equality and inequality starts at once.

So, we know the first great purpose of Democracy: that each man shall be spontaneously himself ---

each man himself, each woman herself, without any question of equality or inequality entering in at all; and that no man shall try to determine the being of any other man, or of any other woman.

But, because of the temptation which awaits every individual --- the temptation to fall out of being, into automatism and mechanization, every individual must be ready at all times to defend his own being against the mechanization and materialism forced upon him by those people who have fallen or departed from being. It is the long unending fight, the fight for the soul's own freedom of spontaneous being, against the mechanism and materialism of the fallen.

All the foregoing deals really with the integral, whole nature of man. If man would but *keep* whole, integral, everything could be left at that. There would be no need for laws and governments: agreement would be spontaneous. Even the great concerted social activities would be essentially spontaneous.

But in his present state of unspeakable barbarism, man is unable to distinguish his own spontaneous integrity from his mechanical lusts and aspirations. Hence there must still be laws and governments. But laws and governments henceforth, we see it clearly and we must never forget it, relate only to the material world: to property, the possession of property and the means of life, and to the material-mechanical nature of man.

In the past, no doubt, there were great ideals to fulfil: ideals of brotherhood, oneness, and equality. Great sections of humanity tended to cohere into

particular brotherhoods, expressing their oneness and their equality and their united purpose in a manner peculiar to themselves. For no matter how single an ideal may be, even such a mathematical ideal as equality and oneness, it will find the most diverse and even opposite expressions. So that brotherhood and oneness in Germany never meant the same as brotherhood and oneness in France. Yet each was a brotherhood, and each was a oneness. Souls, as they work out the same ideal, work it out differently: always differently, until they reach the point where the spontaneous integrity of being finally breaks. And then, when pure mechanization or materialism sets in, the soul is automatically pivoted, and the most diverse of creatures fall into a common mechanical unison. This we see in America. It is not a homogeneous, spontaneous coherence so much as a disintegrated amorphousness which lends itself to perfect mechanical unison.

Men have reached the point where, in further fulfilling their ideals, they break down the living integrity of their being and fall into sheer mechanical materialism. They become automatic units, determined entirely by mechanical law.

This is horribly true of modern democracy --- socialism, conservatism, bolshevism, liberalism, republicanism, communism: all alike. The one principle that governs all the *isms* is the same: the principle of the idealized unit, the possessor of property. Man has his highest fulfilment as a possessor of property: so they all say, really. One half says that the uneducated,

being the majority, should possess the property; the other half says that the educated, being the enlightened, should possess the property. There is no more to it. No need to write books about it.

This is the last of the ideals. This is the last phase of the ideal of equality, brotherhood, and oneness. All ideals work down to the sheer materialism which is their intrinsic reality, at last.

It doesn't matter, now, who has the property. They have all lost their being over it. Even property, that most substantial of realities, evaporates once man loses his integral nature. It is curious that it is so, but it is undeniable. So that property is now fast evaporating.

Wherein lies the hope? For with it evaporates the last ideal. Sometime, somewhere, man will wake up and realize that property is only there to be used, not to be possessed. He will realize that possession is a kind of illness of the spirit, and a hopeless burden upon the spontaneous self. The little pronouns "my" and "our" will lose all their mystic spell.

The question of property will never be settled till people cease to care for property. Then it will settle itself. A man only needs so much as will help him to his own fulfilment. Surely the individual who wants a motor-car merely for the sake of having it and riding in it is as hopeless an automaton as the motor-car itself.

When men are no longer obsessed with the desire to possess property, or with the parallel desire to prevent another man's posessing it, then, and only then shall we be glad to turn it over to the State. Our way of State-

ownership is merely a farcical exchange of words, not of ways. We only intend our States to be Unlimited Liability Companies instead of Limited Liability Companies.

The Prime Minister of the future will be no more than a sort of steward, the Minister of Commerce will be the great housekeeper, the Minister for Transport the head-coachman: all just chief servants, no more: servants.

When men become their own decent selves again, then we can so easily arrange the material world. The arrangement will come, as it must come, spontaneously, not by previous ordering. Until such time, what is the good of talking about it? All discussion and idealizing of the possession of property, whether individual or group or State possession, amounts now to no more than a fatal betrayal of the spontansous self. All settlement of the property question must arise spontaneously out of the new impulse in man, to free himself from the extraneous load of possession, and walk naked and light. Every attempt at preordaining a new material world only adds another last straw to the load that already has broken so many backs. If we are to keep our backs unbroken, we must deposit all property on the ground, and learn to walk without it. We must stand aside. And when many men stand aside, they stand in a new world; a new world of man has come to pass. This is the Democracy, the new order.

VOYAGE TO EUROPE

by

HERVEY WHITE

PART II

(*Continued from last issue*)

On board the Victoria

I told my friend that I was going aft, and he informed the others.

"Well," they said, "it is natural that he does not like it here; the Englishman like the Englishman, the Italian the Italian and the Russian the Russian."

They watched me off kindly enough, I feeling my disgrace deeper than ever. I went aft with the purser, was introduced to the Doctor, a young Brooklyn physician who received me somewhat stiffly, and then the second steward showed me my room below which he was rapidly putting in order. It was a large state-room formerly occupied by four berths. One is now made into a sofa. I went on deck for a half hour till all was ready, then I was sick enough to go to my state-room now that I had one and stay there.

At once on entering I had dropped down in the most immediate position possible on the sofa, which was covered with a clean linen cloth. Ah, the blessedness of that perfume of clean, freshly ironed linen! I lay extended, inhaling deliciously, letting the waves of seasickness shudder as they would through my bones.

Friday, November 2, 1894
3 o'clock P.M.

The ship has been rolling a good deal today and my seasickness has not yet left me; when I look in the mirror I am quite startled. My face has a greenish pallor, still I eat and sleep and do not suffer any acute pains.

This morning I had a talk with the Captain concerning the Italians. The Captain has been in this transporting business for some time. At one trip he brought over fourteen hundred, at another, seventeen hundred emigrants. He says he has tried harder than any man on this line to keep the quarters clean and decent, but it is impossible. They will lie below for days if they are not driven on deck. When commands have been of no avail he has often had the sailors carry out the women and babies, then drive the men out with sulphur. They grumble if the hatchway is open and say they are cold. They gorge themselves with food and complain because they do not have enough. Their habits below and above are the extreme of filthiness. He says now he has given up all idea of reforming them and is satisfied with cleaning up the quarters once a day and driving all on deck if the weather is fair.

He told me, too, something of how they are sent

over. In every shipping port in Italy are rich agents who contract with the steamship agencies for carrying emigrants across. These agencies have sub-agents all through Italy who do their best to get the people dissatisfied and desirous of going to America. When they get a man they instruct him carefully as to how he shall answer all inquiries, and as they say, keep the American black legs from beating them; for example the conversation may run thus:

"Are you hired by an Italian contractor?"

"Oh, no, I go independently. I have a brother in America."

"Will you work for me?"

"Oh, no, I have work with my brother."

So they are told they must protect themselves against the foreigners and so they are kept under the thumb of the Italian boss.

The Captain thinks it useless for American societies to try to free them. They will trust their own bosses always. Agents give them tickets from the interior of Italy to small towns in the interior of America. It is a big business and the agents live in palaces in the Italian ports.

I happened to mention that sometime the United States Government might consider the stopping of this wholesale transportation.

"Oh, no, it won't" he laughed. "The United States Government will not do anything that will let wages rise. If these men were not shipped in by the thousand, American employers would have to pay fabulous wages,

and it is the employers who make the laws."

Sunday, November 4, 1894

Still my seasickness hangs on to me so that I have no life to do anything. It seems as if all the good of the voyage is to be lost entirely.

Last night I spent an hour or so with Mr. Edwards, the third mate, a Welshman about my own age who took regular training in theory at an officers' school before coming to sea. He is an unusually thoughtful fellow and would be a heavy weight among the best of college men. He told me much about the life here, its disappointments and its advantages. In fact none of the fellows here will speak on the favorable side of a seafaring life. The Captain is the worst of them all. They say that they go to sea when they are boys and know no better, once in they must stay, they are good for nothing else.

In no other profession have I ever seen such longing to get away from work, to get back home and rest, to try to forget the sea and all that pertains to it.

It is not, however, a good place to lay by money, for the life goes on and on to old age, with the inevitable end of living off more successful relatives who fortunately have not gone to sea.

The Captain seems to hate the sea in every way; he daily damns the men who wrote *Life on the Ocean Wave* and *Rocked in the Cradle of the Deep*. He thinks that the sea is only cold and cruel, treacherous and disagreeable at its brightest. At first I was inclined to think much of this was talk, but now I no longer doubt

the sincerity of his pessimism.

Monday, November 5, 1894

Still seasick; last night as I was sitting on deck an old sailor sat down by me and talked to me. I had spoken with him the first day on board, he seemed so spruce and polite, and afterwards I had been somewhat startled to see him clumping about the deck in heavy shoes and ragged garments. So I was glad when he sat down by me and began telling me of his life.

He stuttered slightly, hesitated, went back and began again, often laying his finger on my arm to impress upon me the importance of what he was just going to say, though his air of semi-apology plainly told that he thought as yet he had said nothing of any consequence. I cannot give his words. I cannot describe the sympathy seeking stare of his blue eyes, but I will give the story as it comes to me now, and from his own point of view as much as possible.

He was one of the unlucky ones.

"I suppose there are many unlucky ones," he said. "Now I have tried everything, everything, and nothing turns out well."

He had worked in the hayfields in Australia and dug gold in the diggings; he had tried New Zealand, worked on the railroad, in the streets of Galveston and on the wharves among the niggers, but everywhere there were too many laborers already. Wages were low and he was soon dropped off because he was not needed.

Once he just missed a good living: a furnisher of supplies in some port wanted a fellow who could speak

French and English, (this man is native to some French Island) and all he would have to do would be to go on board the ships and write down the stores needed, just write them down, mind, nothing else, a gentleman's life. But the skipper would not let him go, though there were plenty of other hands to be had; he hinted to the supply furnisher that he might desert but they dare not employ him then, so this chance of a life time was lost.

And he needed the money so. He had a mother and a lame sister depending on him for support. He just this year paid three pounds for an iron for his sister's foot. You see she was struck on the foot when a child of three years by another child and her leg has never grown since and now she is twenty-two years old.

"But she be strong other ways, sir. Sometimes just to try 'er you know I tease 'er and she jest cuffs and shakes me as I would a little boy. She'll never marry, has 'ad a good offer by a respectable fellow with property 'an I sezs, why didn't you take 'im? But 'no sir,' sez she, 'you suppose I'm goin' where I can't help you and mother? If I has plenty an' sees you in want an' goes to give you then he'll say 'ow he didn't marry the family. Not much! I stay with you where I can help you if I want."

Well, he talked so much he forgot to ring the watch bell and I stepped in before the mate should come and berate him after the usual fashion.

Wednesday.

It seems somewhat remarkable that the big blustering, boasting Englishman Captain should take me so

readily into his companionship, yet such is the case.

"I made one great mistake in my life," he said to me last night. "I had a chance to marry when I was twenty-two. It is strange how a thing like that will change a man's life and make it all worthless or all useful. I think there is no man in the world so utterly alone as I am. I have no relatives, save one married sister, no friends, no business acquaintances, all business is done for me on shore. I merely run this ship back and forth wherever I am told, and get grumbled at for it in the end. If I had money, say a million dollars I would settle down, hire a cunning lawyer and expose this whole sea-faring business. With my knowledge I could do it and I could make it warm for the greatest industry of Great Britain."

Curiously enough the Captain is a strong Conservative who hates parsons and reforms and who thinks the English Government is the greatest institution on earth. He is a very well informed man, reads constantly and has talked to his passengers a great deal. He would like to be keeper of a lighthouse or something of the sort but has no possible way of getting a position. He says if he could get twelve hundred dollars a year he would be willing to do the commonest clerk work ashore. He has always lived well, spending all his salary as fast as it came in. It is a desolate thing to hear him talk.

I went down below night before last and watched the coal heavers working with the furnaces. One can hardly see why a man should care to live if half of his

time must be spent down in that intense heat. They say these heavers are drunk on shore always.

I have been visiting the third mate too, and have learned much of his home and boyhood. He comes of a fine family. His mother - - - he showed me her photograph - - - is unusually intelligent looking and is literary. One of his sisters, too, is strikingly handsome. He intends to send her to college. He himself devotes two hours a day to writing a sort of continuous letter home, and one hour to the study of some language. He is only twenty-three and hopes to enter the navy.

I have been feeling almost well today. The weather has been unusually fine. Not much work increasing my knowledge of Italian. I have worked at my grammar, however.

Thursday, November 8, II A.M

I have been in the third mate's room all morning talking. Last night I spent with the other officers, as I doubtless will all evenings hereafter. We have a perfect summer sea today, bright and calm except for the long swell. We have, too, all varieties of sky, thunder heads in the south, blue in the north and just enough overclouds to screen us from the sun.

A full rigged sailing ship is on our horizon, just in the edge of the broad mirror under the sun where it shows up to the best advantage. The sea is not blue today except as shades passing from light to gray are blueish.

3 P.M. Same day.

The wind has died down to a calm, the sky is clear

and the pale undulations of the sea come smoothly in from the southeast. Even our steamer does not disturb them for they curve back from our prow as soft and gentle as the cheek of a girl. If Italy lies in the midst of such seas I am content.

Friday, November 9, 10 A. M.

This day came to a close in a most spectacular sunset. The whole sea was a beautiful lilac, constantly changing. The fire of the western sky was barred with heavy slate black wind clouds that hung along the horizon and even rested on the sea like dusky forest islands. And yet all this lacked the impressiveness of a sunset on the plains. There was not the dull gray foundation to bring the glory of the sky into relief. There was nothing to suggest sleep and rest now that the day was over. Later the moon was clear and near the full, but the effect was not so beautiful as on the plains; no, no, the sea is very good to cross but it could never be a home. Certainly it could not be to one born inland.

Saturday, November 14, 9 A. M.

Land, ho! I knew we were to see Cape St. Vincent this morning, so when I awoke I stuck my head out the door and asked the steward if land was in sight. "Yes," was the cheery reply.

Trousers, jersey, shoes --- it was the work of a second, and I was on deck. The sun was lying red on the edge of the sea and off to the north and east lay the land, a great wall stretching across the waters, rose-color in the dawn. It was a good first glimpse of the old world ahead. I confess that even in my unreverential

mind a spirit of something old and un-American was awakened. I do not know the history of this Cape, nor the national air of Portugal, but Spain is near Portugal I believe, so I get behind the wheel house all by myself and hum over *Isabella* as I watch the growing Cape.

Now we are passing it. I see the green grass on the top of the wall and stretching backwards over the high promontory. The old tingling is coming back to my feet, what joy to run along that cliff!

The sea has lost its deep blue and is green again as it was in the New York harbor. But these brown and pinkish sandstone cliffs are so different from the rugged edges of America. There is not a tree on the whole stretch before me; just sand and grass and sunshine, with a fog rising over the plain to the westward. Soon I suppose the fog will claim it all, but I have seen the old world and will enjoy my breakfast now like a true American. None of your French rolls and coffee. Beefsteak, potatoes, bread in the bulk, butter, marmalade and satisfaction!

11:30 A. M.

Like mountains rising from the plains, so these distant sunflecked cliffs lift themselves up from the sea. We have been in sight of the coast of Portugal all morning and it lies now before us, the faintest dream of land and of mountains.

I think there are mountains toward the westward, but the clouds obscure their tops and only the sunny slopes are visible. Steamers may be seen on every hand and white triangular sails brighten the water. No work,

today, only look and wait for further looking.

Monday, November 12.

We reached Gibraltar at three o'clock yesterday morning. It was almost impossible to sleep. I heard the propeller stop, but did not go on deck till the thick purple dawn was hanging on the African mountains. The rock of Gibraltar was square in front of me and the Spanish hills were to the west with the white villages nestling at their feet. There was one of these towns across from me, built on the very top of a mound-like mountain. There it lay, white in the dawn, and through the day still whiter in the sunshine, crowning the mountain like a cap of snow; like some holy city of the East.

After breakfast the Doctor, the chief steward and I were rowed into the noisy Spanish landing at Gibraltar. We entered the labyrinth of stalls and streets and my eyes were greedy for the shifting crowd. Here was a swarthy Moor in a doorway, and there some Spanish girls going to church. I have never before seen the like of that whiteness of their complexion, so I cannot well describe it. It is so different from the pink and white bloom of our northern girls, yet it is so different from their pallor too. I can liken it to flour nearer than I can liken it to anything else. Not flour in its thin whiteness as you see it in the kitchen, but flour in its creamy depths as you see it in vast quantities at the mill, with just a suggestion of alabaster transparency.

But the girls are past now, and the glare of scarlet clad soldiers is in my eyes. They tramp, tramp by and

pay no attention to me at all, though I scrutinize them severely. Then all the light is gone, because we have entered a little stone cafè and are having wine and coffee. A huge fat man comes in holding a tray of omelet high above his head. He calls out that he will sell some of this omelet for a few cents, but no one dares to accost such royal dignity and he departs graciously, allowing us all to live for another day.

As we walk from the trading part of town into the soldiers' quarters, sometimes we get a glance upward between the white Moorish houses at the towering rock over our heads, serene and high and blue as the sky it is set in. We are told how it is honey-combed with tunnels, how each innocent looking place conceals a deadly cannon, but we secretly like best to look at the feathery green foliage of palm and bamboo with other sturdy trees that I have not learned to name, but am satisfied with the thought that they well fill my dreams of olive trees.

I long very much to climb the rock, but the doctor is hot and tired and the chief steward has left us to attend to his stores. We walk to the end of the peninsula and look out over the Mediterranean, then we go back again to the landing and wait two hours till our boat arrives to take us to dinner on the ship.

At the landing I watch the Spanish boatmen and joy and revel in the sight of their cleanliness. Their shirts and cotton trousers are often patched and worn, but are as fresh and white as soap and bleaching can make them. I think I should like a life among the

peasants of Spain. They say the Spaniards are thieves, perhaps so; but such clean wholesome thieves!

We were off again by four o'clock, and the African and Spanish mountains with the fortification between them were fading away into the violet haziness of the west. All night the moon shone, the sea was as level as a floor. I talked with my Scotch friends on the deck till it was near midnight.

Naples

Friday, November 16, 1894. 8 P.M.

Here I am in my own little room in this strange city of a strange land. Yet I hear the street cars ringing their gongs, and the distant roar from hoofs, wheels and voices is not un-American. Why should I be lonely? Long ago, it was Thackeray told me I must always live alone even in the midst of a crowd of friends. I was lonely, however, before eating my dinner. I thought of the gay gathering on board the Victoria, of my sturdy Scotch friends and what they were doing and wondered after all what I was here for, jabbering this gesticulating unintelligibleness and being hailed by every beggar on the street until I should consent to let him arry my bag and charge me outrageously for it, or stand up and fight with him then and there.

What a time I had finding my room! I asked for a certain street at every corner, and corners are numerous here, but I always got what I wanted in the end. On the track of an Englishman with a room to let at first, I shifted to a French woman and finally struck out independently. I reached the high part of the city

and asked the people in the street for what I wanted. Every one ran to show me boarding houses, and then loudly demanded francs whether he found the houses or not. A German woman wanted three francs a day, all the rest wanted two at least, but finally I found this little room for one, and have paid my three dollars in advance and have a home for two weeks to come.

I enter through the kitchen by the back stairs. But what of that? The floor is marble, the ceiling is twelve feet above me. A full length French window opens on to a tiny balcony where I can sit under the stars.

On the street below there is a little restaurant where I dined on macheroni, bread and fruit for fifteen cents, and last but not least I think the landlady --- who herself is comely --- has a handsome daughter. We are good friends, too, even if we did have a bit of a war over the price of the room and how much I should pay the fellow that showed it me.

But more will come of these things and something of the city, too. Already I feel that America has not all the enterprise of the world. The beautiful houses that are being built by far surpass our cheap cages in elegance and refinement, and the gardens and some of the old buildings too we cannot hope to equal, and yet it is said that Naples has no fine architecture.

Saturday, November 17, 1894. 3 P.M.

I am on the Victoria again waiting to see if the fellows will make up an agreeable party for Pompei tomorrow. It did seem good to have an English dinner even after so short an absence. I find it will cost me

more than a franc and a half a day for food, so that in Naples at least I shall not keep to my fifty cents a day. Seventy-five cents seems to be more like my daily expenditure and I am afraid I shall be a little gaunt even at that sum.

However, I may do better when I set out to tramp. Besides I have not yet learned the things to ask for.

I spent some time this morning watching the poor people who keep fruit and fish stands along the wharves. The cheap little box that forms their table seems to be all the house these creatures have. The women do all their work in the sun, beside them the children are combed, the babies are rocked and nursed. What these people live for it seems hard to guess, and yet they are happy and life is sweet doubtless. For that matter I can see no reason why life should not be as sweet to them as it is to these men who work and stand guard here in the hot sun among the ships. What must be the thoughts of the custom house officer for example, who counts and waits and counts again, then waits twice before counting. Of course he has shelter and better food than the stall keepers, but all such values are only comparative, and he grumbles as honestly at his fare as the stall keepers do at theirs. As I think of it I see that the only real grumbler is my idle self. These men do not question existence. They accept that like men and complain only of trifles.

I have nothing to do, and now behold the consequences. I begin now to like the Americans for their rushing things when they get off sightseeing. It shows

they are working people naturally, and when idleness is forced on them they cannot endure it, but make work of the idleness.

Monday, November 19, 1894. 11 A.M.

Alas! I cannot write of all the wonders of this two hours walk over the hill behind the city and into the village and country bits beyond. I cannot speak of the shade of this half summer, half autumn day that I enjoy; of the green moss banks behind me, of the depth of terraced gardens in front and below, graced and plumed as they are by the stately palm-like stone pines. Nor can I tell of the old ruined villa on the hill to my right, rising against the blue sky in gray raggedness, with latticed windows and deep tiled curving roof in which soft clinging things of green are growing. I cannot tell of narrowed high-walled streets I have explored, filled with these singing, dark-skinned, idly working people: nor yet of the quaint inns passed where clean swept shaded courts are set with wooden chairs and tables, and where goats and geese and children play together. No, all these things I must forget and go back to yesterday and tell of Pompei and Vesuvius, for what traveller is any traveller at all if he does not visit these common place wonders and tell his friends and write his books about them all the remainder of his days.

We were three in all; the Doctor, the chief steward and myself, and we set out from the good ship Victoria at ten o'clock in the morning to see the buried city. At the railway station we boxed ourselves up in a very neat compartment and travelled slowly, for short and

very long separated intervals. An hour later we were let out at Pompei.

We went up to the gate and I was properly solemnizing myself, secretly aggravated to realize that the house of Glaucus and the Temple of Isis were not more clearly fixed in my book-knowledge of the lost city, when halt! stop at the gate and pay forty cents entrance fee!

"But Sunday is a free day," we argued, producing our Baedeckers in evidence.

"Yes, but the law was changed last April, read the notice."

We read, protested, then convinced, we each paid the forty cents and walked up the gray stone tunnel-like "street of the sailors" into the exhumed city.

We turned into the museum and looked for a few minutes on the cinder incrusted skeletons of men and women lying there. When the heart is pained for their contortions the eye may turn to the long rows of slender vases that line the wall on either side, and peace and calm once more is flowing into the soul.

We walked out and moved on to see the city that already had a new meaning and interest for us.

A guide came to us and asked if we wish to have him show us about.

"How much?" we asked.

"Whatever you like," was the old answer.

We thought we might use him for a few points of interest and then go on alone. We agreed upon a franc and a half and took him, starting through the narrow

wheel-worn streets. After an hour of the rapidly speaking and walking catalogue, we tried to dismiss him and go alone in the cool and shady silent places. But he explained that he was not allowed to leave us, for there is a danger of things being taken. We sighed and meekly followed him.

Sometimes, when we looked into a ruined temple where the green moss had carpeted some secluded corner, I felt the sadness of this scientific side-show, which once had been the environ of so many generations of lives.

Would it not be better, I thought, to write it and photograph it all in the dry books and then turn it open again to the people to walk in and wear and even ruin if they will, but at best to enjoy and use? Not so much because it is theirs by right, but because it is more beautiful so, more natural, more fitting.

Why are the inquisitive, tight-laced leg-weary strangers here instead, filling the otherwise deserted byways with their vulgar stare and chatter?

These are all of my impressions of Pompei.

Afterwards we ordered a forty cents dinner and debated what to do. The hotel waiter saw our weakness and began explaining the advantages of a ponyback trip up Vesuvius. Only seven francs each with a franc or two for the guide. We talked of the splendid day, of the chance never occuring again; at least it would not for my two companions. So we agreed to go.

Ah! the joy of pressing a saddle between my legs again after many years. How merry we were, and how

the ponies jounced us. We learned their names. Macheroni is my steed, Beefsteca the doctor's. McRae's is nameless, but he answers readily to the crack of the lash. We bounced through the village streets and shouted to the begging children. Dismounting at an inn, we went inside and drank wine. An hour later we were climbing the cone of ashes in earnest.

Sometime I may write more of Vesuvius, but now I will only say that after a hard walk up a mile of steep cinders we heard a dismal roar beneath our feet and ran and looked over into the sulpher stained crater where the red fire and stones were belching up from that awesome roaring throat into the smoky sky. Sometime, but not now, I may attempt to tell of the view of Naples with Capri and Ischia wrapping themselves in the dusky twilight.

We made our way down the cone of ashes to our ponies, and thence came home in the cool flower-scented darkness of the night.

In Naples again, I said my last goodbye to my two friends and came home, alone once more in this foreign city.

(*to be continued*)

TUMBLE-WEED

by

JAMES THOMPSON

After supper a few nights ago we were sitting around the table, drinking coffee, smoking, and talking. And then somehow --- I forget now what led up to it --- we began speaking of tumble-weed.

Curious, the mistaken belief Barbara and myself had about the plant. We both thought it was a strange, wandering bush, blown about the prairies by the winds and taking its food as it went.

Very vividly I remember the first time I saw one. Last summer it was, when Barbara and myself were driving through the vast, heat-shimmering western prairies, on our way to New Mexico.

"See! There's a tumble-weed!" cried Barbara.

I looked to where she was pointing and saw a round-shaped, brownish plant moving erratically in the hot wind through the yellow scorched buffalo grass. And I wondered at it, for it seemed to me to be a very strange creature, between plant and beast, wandering about that way and taking its food in some mysterious, unrooted fashion.

That is why, after supper the other night, I turned

to Lee, who had grown up on the Kansas prairies, and asked him:

"But if the tumble-weed has no roots, then how does it get its nourishment?"

Lee looked at me in a surprised manner, then laughed.

"What makes you think it has no roots?"

And then he explained to me what the tumble-weed was --- not at all the fantastic creature I believed it to be.

"It has roots, like any other plant. But they're shallow --- haven't got a firm grip in the earth. And when they lose their vitality, a strong wind comes along and uproots them. The ones you saw blowing through the prairies were dead, or dying ... They're very dangerous, too. Often spread devastating fires ..."

Our conversation veered to other things. And while we were speaking of a recent trip we had made to New York City, I suddenly recalled the crumpled letter I had picked up on one of the streets of the labyrinthian gauntlet of the lower East Side.

I don't know what prompted me to pick that letter up. The wind was blowing it along in a peculiar manner in the gutter, so that when I first noticed it I thought it was some living thing. But when I approached it and stared down at it in the sickly light of the street lamps, I saw the writing on it and realized that it was a discarded letter.

Out of curiousity I picked it up, smoothed it out and read it. And I saved it, for it seems to me to be

haunted with the strangely sad, uprooted wanderings of the Irish. Here is an exact copy of it:

April 12, 1938

Dear Sean,

To-day I got your card and was really glad to hear from you. Three years now since I saw you last. It's a long time, but it went by fast enough --- "*days that pass like shadows over the heart* --- ."

Feel as if I have nothing strange or new to tell you. No matter who lives it, life to-day seems to be an oppressively monotonous affair. No, I have not had much success since I came here. Looks as if the germs of success are not in me. However there are a few more years. Have been ill almost all the time since I came here. Just paying off the old debts to Nature, I suppose. I cut out the dope over two years ago, but am still convalescing as it were. The heart is not so good and I have to be careful.

Made a few contacts in the movies, but ill-health ruined the chances they offered. Then a few articles sold here and there, but nothing to mention seriously. Yes, I like it out here. A fellow can mostly always see the sun and there are flowers and green places. The sea is only an hours journey from here. It's the very best place in America to live, but even so I would not change the boggiest acre in Ireland for all the orange groves and flowers in California.

Feel now I should never have left the old country, or feel that I left it too late. At the best it is hard for me to adjust myself to new places and strange people. Like

my father, I dislike people anyway, and always have, and I guess when one dislikes people one dislikes living. Men like myself, I notice, just turn their faces to the wall and die --- for no obvious reason. Often think of E's poem in that connection ---

"*What of the will to do?*
It has vanished long ago.
A dream shaft pierced it through
From the unknown Archer's bow."

I have said this is a lovely place to live. But at times one gets weary of the monotony of sunny days. Often remember the hills over in Connaught, with the clouds in turmoil above them and the rain slashing down the slopes. Snipe out of the marshes and the smell of the wet earth ... Strange, the lure the soil has for me. But then it must be Irish soil. I've been about the deserts and prairies and ranches here, but can't live on them.

Saw a story by Ned Riordan in Esquire. Well done, but nothing to it. A windy tale if I ever read one. He knows how to write, if only he had something to write about.

That chap O'Malley you ask about --- never heard of him out here. You must have the address wrong. Met a few people I knew in New York. They tell me Greenwich Village is all changed. It could be torn down and I'm not likely to weep. Like the Chinese poet, I'll keep my tears for piss. As I knew it, the Village was the cheapest fake in the world. To tell the truth, though, it's almost as bad out here where an actor is considered

a genius. All the bastards know could be taught to an intelligent monkey.

I sent a story --- I mean about ten thousand words of a projected story --- to a few publishers in New York. One said it was too dirty to print. The other that I would be compared to James Joyce --- to my detriment, naturally. I quit it then and there. It was difficult writing anyway, and I have not much mental energy.

Yes, that hold-up set me back a long way. I was a fool to fight, but I never thought of that until I was in the hospital.

Los Angeles is the sewer of America. It's the headquarters for every whoreson, knave, and cheat from the 48 states. Also it's hard to make a living here, although so far I have managed fairly well. Some fellows I knew in N.Y.C. who were then working for Dan Reeves are now out here getting salaries from three hundred to a thousand dollars a week. Much as I despise them, I often wish I were an actor. John Ford, the Connaughtman who made *The Informer* is supposed to give me a good job any day now, but I have heard that tale before.

As soon as I regain my health, which I am doing slowly, I'll start another novel. At least, so I tell myself. Not saying that I am not reasonably content out here --- I am. Right now from the window I can see the Pacific shining in the sun through the lacy branches of a pepper tree. It's nice and spacious and the sunsets are glorious, but for all that a man can be just as happy

looking at a hole in the wall. Even so, the thought of N.Y.C. makes me shiver. It's no place for a poor man. Allright if you're making a big salary or can keep drunk more or less regularly. But myself, out here with all the fairly good wine, I can't take a drop. Not one doctor's orders, but half a dozen of them, plus a little experience of my own. God never gives us nuts until our teeth are gone.

Of course it's always a possibility that I may return to N.Y.C. some day. Maybe this coming summer. At least it's a few days nearer to Ireland. Well, I guess I've talked enough about myself. How is it with you? It ought to be a little different on account of your kids. I'd like to see Martin again. He ought to be a stout lad by now.

Drop me line as soon as you can. Ever meet up with Jack Cavanaugh or Michael O'Byrne? I hear that our friend McManus found a woman who supports him. Success comes to some people a little late in life. Never forget the freezing night I laid on a pallet in his place. *The Last Resort* I called it. Twelve o'clock midnight, and the wind from the Hudson blowing through the the place like the wrath of God. I was as cold as a witch's tit, and McManus, dilletante and man of letters, stood naked on the floor with an inch of guttering candle clutched in his hand, telling me how an article for a high class magazine should be written. His old cadaver was blue and shivering, but he had a high Olympian disdain for his body's protests. Nothing mattering but that he impart to me the benefit of his

experience gained by writing three or four letters to an Irish weekly some twenty years ago. And the big Swede who visited him. He'd lie all night with some old drab, and get up in the morning protesting that "she vas a good vomans." I have never seen such a chivalrous gentleman before, or since.

I was up in San Francisco for awhile. It's a good town and the people there are different than the fakes in Los Angeles.

Then I went down to San Diego, and that is the chamber pot of the world. Reminded me of that poem written by a Westmeath man about the town of Ballinallee in County Longford ---

As I went out in Ballinallee
Is all that I could see
Was a church without a steeple.
There was a whore at every door
Laughing at the people.

As far as I could see there was nothing in San Diego but police, prostitutes, and sailors. The very first night I was there I went to into a beer-parlour, and hardly had I taken my first mouthful of lousy beer when I was arrested for being drunk. The cop kindly explained that the city was in debt, and drunk or sober I would have to be arrested. So arrested I was, and fined ten dollars.

I made an acquaintance in San Diego --- a Yale graduate. He invited me to go along with him down to Agua Caliente. I went. And he drove his car like a man in an epileptic fit. When the speedometer was register-

ing ninety miles an hour he began to boast to me of how he had escaped three weeks before from a lunatic asylum. I was relieved to see a squad of motor-cycle police on our trail. That night I also spent in jail. They shipped my insane host back to the bughouse. But little things like that make life bearable.

Well, I'll say so long now. Write soon.

Dermuid

UN ETRE ETOILIQUE

by

HENRY MILLER

As I write these lines Anaïs Nin has begun the fiftieth volume of her diary, the record of a twenty-year struggle towards self-realization. Still a young woman, she has produced on the side, in the midst of an intensely active life, a monumental confession which when given to the world will take its place beside the revelations of St. Augustine, Petronius, Abelard, Rousseau, Proust, and others.

Of the twenty years recorded half the time was spent in America, half in Europe. The diary is full of voyages; in fact, like life itself it might be regarded as nothing but voyage. The epic quality of it, however, is eclipsed by the metaphysical. The diary is not a journey towards the heart of darkness, in the stern Conradian sense of destiny, not a *voyage au bout de la nuit*, as with Céline, nor even a voyage to the moon in the psychological sense of escape. It it much more like a mythological voyage towards the source and fountain head of life --- I might say an *astrologic* voyage of metamorphosis.

The importance of such a work for our time hardly

needs to be stressed. More and more, as our era draws to a close, are we made aware of the tremendous significance of the human document. Our literature, unable any longer to express itself through dying forms, has become almost exclusively biographical. The artist is retreating behind the dead forms to rediscover in himself the eternal source of creation. Our age, intensely productive, yet thoroughly un-vital, un-creative, is obsessed with a lust for investigating the mysteries of the personality. We turn instinctively towards those documents --- fragments, notes, autobiographies, diaries --- which appease our hunger for more life because, avoiding the circuitous expression of art, they seem to put us directly in contact with that which we are seeking. I say they 'seem to' because there are no short cuts such as we imagine, because the most direct expression, the most permanent and the most effective is always that of art. Even in the most naked confessions, there exists the same ellipsis of art. The diary is an art form just as much as the novel or the play. The diary simply requires a greater canvas; it is a chronological tapestry which, in its ensemble, or at whatever point it is abandoned, reveals a form and language as exacting as other literary forms. A work like *Faust*, indeed, reveals more discrepancies, irrevelancies and enigmatic stumbling-blocks than a diary such as Amiel's, for example. The former represents an artificial mode of synchronization; the latter has an organic integration which even the interruption of death does not disturb.

The chief concern of the diarist is not with truth,

though it may seem to be, any more than the chief concern of the conscious artist is with beauty. Beauty and truth are the by-products in a quest for something beyond either of these. But just as we are impressed by the beauty of a work of art, so we are impressed by the truth and sincerity of a diary. We have the illusion, in reading the pages of an intimate journal, that we are face to face with the soul of its author. This is the illusory quality of the diary, its art quality, so to speak, just as beauty is the illusory element in the accepted work of art. The diary has to be read differently from the novel, but the goal is the same: self-realization. The diary, by its very nature, is quotidian and organic, whereas the novel is timeless and conventional. We know more, or seem to know more, immediately about the author of a diary than we do about the author of a novel. But as to what we *really* know of either it is hard to say. For the diary is not a transcript of life itself any more than the novel is. It is a medium of expression in which truth rather than art predominates. But it is not *truth*. It is not for the simple reason that the very problem, the obsession, so to say, is truth. We should look to the diary, therefore, not for the truth about things, but as an expression of this struggle to be free of the obsession for truth.

It is this factor, so important to grasp, which explains the tortuous, repetitive quality of every diary. Each day the battle is begun afresh; as we read we seem to be treading a mystic maze in which the author becomes more and more deeply lost. The mirror of the

author's own experiences becomes the well of truth in which ofttimes he is drowned. In every diary we assist at the birth of Narcissus, and sometimes the death, too. This death, when it occurs, is of two kinds, as in life. In the one case it may lead to dissolution, in the other to re-birth. In the last volume of Proust's great work the nature of this re-birth is magnificently elaborated in the author's disquistions on the metaphysical nature of art. For it is in *Le Temps Retrouve* that the great fresco wheels into another dimension and thus acquires its true symbolic significance. The analysis which had been going on throughout the preceding volumes reaches its climax finally in a vision of the whole; it is almost like the sewing up of a wound. It emphasizes what Nietzsche pointed out long ago as 'the healing quality of art'. The purely personal, Narcissistic element is resolved into the universal; the seemingly interminable confession restores the narrator to the stream of human activity through the realization that life itself is an art. This realization is brought about, as Proust so well points out, through obeying the still small voice within. It is the very opposite of the Socratic method, the absurdity of which Nietzsche exposed so witheringly. The mania for analysis leads finally to its opposite, and the sufferer passes on beyond his problems into a new realm of reality. The therapeutic aspect of art is then, in this higher state of consciousness, seen to be the religious or metaphysical element. The work which was begun as a refuge and escape from the terrors of reality lead the author back into life, not *adapted* to the reality

about, but *superior* to it, as one capable of recreating it in accordance with his own needs. He sees that it was not life but himself from which he had been fleeing, and that the life which had heretofore been insupportable was merely the projection of his own phantasies. It is true that the new life is also a projection of the individual's own phantasies, but are invested now with the sense of real power; they spring not from dissociation but from integration. The whole past life resumes its place in the balance and creates a vital, stable equilibrium which would never have resulted without the pain and the suffering. It is in this sense that the endless turning about in a cage which characterized the author's thinking, the endless fresco which seems never to be brought to a conclusion, the ceaseless fragmentation and analysis which goes on night and day, is like a gyration which through sheer centrifugal force lifts the sufferer out of his obsessions and frees him for the rhythm and movement of life by joining him to the great universal stream in which all of us have our being.

A book is part of life, a manifiestation of life, just as much as a tree or a horse or a star. It obeys its own rhythms, its own laws, whether it be a novel, a play, or a diary. The deep, hidden rhythm of life is always there --- that of the pulse, the heart beat. Even in the seemingly stagnant waters of the journal this flux and reflux is evident. It is there in the whole of the work as much as in each fragment. Looked at it in its entirety, especially for example in such a work as that of Anaïs Nin, this cosmic pulsation corresponds to the

death and re-birth of the individual. Life assumes the aspect of a labyrinth into which the seeker is plunged. She goes in unconsciously to slay her old self. One might say, as in this case, that the disintegration of the self had come about through a shock. It would not matter much what had produced the disintegration; the important thing is that at a given moment she passed into a state of two-ness. The old self, which had been attached to the father who abandoned her and the loss of whom created an insoluble conflict in her, found itself confronted with a nascent other self which seems to lead her further and further into darkness and confusion. The diary, which is the story of her retreat from the world into the chaos of regeneration, pictures the labyrinthine struggle waged by these conflicting selves. Sinking into the obscure regions of her soul she seems to draw the world down over her head, and with it the people she meets and the relationships engendered by her meetings. The illusion of submergence, of darkness and stagnation, is brought about by the ceaseless observation and analysis which goes on in the pages of the diary. The hatches are down, the sky shut out. Everything --- nature, human beings, events, relationships --- is brought below to be dissected and digested. It is a devouring process in which the ego becomes a stupendous red maw. The language itself is clear, painfully clear. It is the scorching light of the intellect locked away in a cave. Nothing which this mind comes in contact with is allowed to go undigested. The result is harrowing and hallucinating. We move with the

author through her labyrinthine world like a knife making an incision into the flesh. It is a surgical operation upon a world of flesh and blood, a Cæsarian operation performed by the embryo with its own private scissors and cleaver.

Let me make a parenthetical remark here. *This diary is written absolutely without malice.* The psychologist may remark of this that the pain inflicted upon her by the loss of her father was so great as to render her incapable of causing pain to others. In a sense this is true, but it is a limited view of the matter. My own feeling is rather that we have in this diary the direct, naked thrust which is of the essence of the great tragic dramas of the Greeks. Racine, Corneille, Molière may indulge in malice --- not the Greek dramatists. The difference lies in the attitude towards Fate. The warfare is not with men, but with the gods. Similarly, in the case of Anaïs Nin's journal: the war is with herself, with God as the sole witness. The diary was written not for the eyes of others, but for the eye of God. She has no malice any more than she has the desire to cheat or to lie. To lie in a diary is the height of absurdity. One would have to be really insane to do that. Her concern is not with others, except as they may reveal to her something about herself. Though the way is tortuous the direction is always the same, always inward, further inward, towards the heart of the self. Every encounter is a preparation for the final encounter, the confrontation with the real Self. To indulge in malice would be to swerve from the ordained path, to waste

a precious moment in the pursuit of her ideal. She moves onward inexorably, as the gods move in the Greek dramas, on towards the realization of her destiny.

There is a very significant fact attached to the origin of this diary, and that is that it was begun in artistic fashion. By that I do not mean it was done with the skill of an artist, with the conscious use of a technique; no, but it was begun as something to be read by some one else, as something to influence some one else. In that sense as an artist. Begun during the voyage to a foreign land, the diary is a silent communion with the father who has deserted her, a gift which she intends to send him from their new home, a gift of love which she hopes will re-unite them. Two days later the war breaks out. By what seems almost like a conspiracy of fate the father and child are kept apart for many years. In the legends which treat of this theme it happens, as in this case, that the meeting takes place when the daughter has come of age.

And so, in the very beginning of her diary, the child behaves precisely like the artist who, through the meduim of his expression, sets about to conquer the world which has denied him. Thinking orginally to woo and enchant the father by the testimony of her grief, thwarted in all her attempts to recover him, she begins little by little to regard the separation as a punishment for her own inadequacy. The difference which had marked her out as a child, and which had already brought down upon her the father's ire, becomes more

accentuated. The diary becomes the confession of her inability to make herself worthy of this lost father who has become for her the very paragon of perfection.

In the very earliest pages of the diary this conflict between the old, inadequate self which was attached to the father and the budding, unknown self which she was creating manifests itself. It is a struggle between the real and the ideal, the annihilating struggle which for most people is carried on fruitlessly to the end of their lives and the significance of which they never learn. Scarcely two years after the diary is begun comes the following passage:

'Quand aucun bruit ne se fait entendre, quand la nuit a recouvert de son sombre paletot la grande ville dont elle me cache l'éclat trompeur, alors il me semble entendre une voix mystérieuse qui me parle; je suppose qu'elle vient de moi-même car elle pense comme moi ... Il me semble que je cherche quelque chose, je ne sais pas quoi, mais quand mon esprit libre dégage des griffes puissantes de cet ennemi mortel, le Monde, il me semble que je trouve ce que je voulais. Serait-ce l'oubli? le silence? Je ne sais, mais cette même voix, quand je crois être seule, me parle. Je ne puis comprendre ce qu'elle dit mais je me dis que l'on ne peut jamais être seule et oubliée dans le monde. Car je nomme cette voix: Mon Génie, mauvais ou bon, je ne puis savoir ...'

Even more striking is a passage in the same volume which begins: 'Dans ma vie terrestre rien n'est changé ...' After recounting the petty incidents which go to make up her earthly life, she adds, *but:*

'Dans la vie que je mène dans l'infini cela est différent. Là, tout est bonheur et douceur, car c'est un rêve. Là, il n'y a pas d'école aux sombres classes, mais il y a Dieu. Là, il n'y a pas de chaise vide dans la famille, qui est toujours au complet. Là, il n'y a pas de bruit, mais de la solitude qui donne la paix. Là, il n'y a pas d'inquiétude pour l'avenir, car c'est un autre rêve. Là, il n'y a pas de larmes, car c'est un sourire. Voilà l'infini où je vis, *car je vis deux fois.* Quand je mourrai sur la terre, il arrivera, comme il arrive à deux lumières allumées à la fois, quand l'une s'eteint l'autre se rallume, et cela avec plus de force. Je m'éteindrai sur la terre, mais je me rallumerai dans l'infini ...'

She speaks of herself mockingly at times as '*une etoilique*' --- a word which she has invented, and why not, since as she says, we have the word *lunatique*. Why not '*etoilique*'? 'Today', she writes, 'I described very poorly *le pays des merveilles ou mon esprit etait*. Je volais dans ce pays lointain où rien n'est impossible. Hier je suis revenue, à la réalitié, à la tristesse. Il me semble que je tombais d'une grande splendeur à une triste misère.'

One thinks inevitably of the manifestoes of the Surrealists, of their unquenchable thirst for the marvellous, and that phrase of Breton's, so significant of the dreamer, the visionary: 'we should conduct ourselves as though we were really *in the world!*' It may seem absurd to couple the utterances of the Surrealists with the writings of a child of thirteen, but there is a great

deal which they have in common, and there is also a point of departure which is even more important. The pursuit of the marvellous is at bottom nothing but the sure instinct of the poet speaking, and it manifests itself everywhere in all epochs, in all conditions of life, in all forms of expression. But this marvellous pursuit of the marvellous, if not understood, can also act as a thwarting force, can become a thing of evil, crushing the individual in the toils of the Absolute. It can become as negative and destructive a force as the yearning for God. When I said a while back that the child had begun her great work in the spirit of an artist I was trying to emphasize the fact that, like the artist, the problem which beset her was to conquer the world. In the process of making herself fit to meet her father again (because to her the world was personified in the Father) she was unwittingly making herself an artist, that is, a self-dependent creature for whom a father would no longer be necessary. When she does encounter him again, after a lapse of almost twenty years, she is a full-fledged being, a creature fashioned after her own image. The meeting serves to make her realize that she has emancipated herself; more indeed, for to her amazement and dismay she also realizes that she has no more need of the one she was seeking. The significance of her heroic struggle with herself now reveals itself symbolically. That which was beyond her, which had dominated and tortured her, which *possessed* her, one might say, no longer exists. She is de-possessed and free at last to live her own life.

Throughout the diary the amazing thing is this intuitive awareness of the symbolic nature of her role. It is this which illuminates the most trivial remarks, the most trivial incidents she records. In reality there is nothing trivial throughout the whole record; everything is saturated with a purpose and significance which gradually becomes clear as the confession progresses. Similarly there is nothing chaotic about the work, although at first glance it may give that impression. The fifty volumes are crammed with human figures, incidents, voyages, books read and commented upon, reveries, metaphysical speculations, the dramas in which she is enveloped, her daily work, her preoccupation with the welfare of others, in short, with a thousand and one things which go to make up her life. It is a great pageant of the times patiently and humbly delineated by one who considered herself as nothing, by one who had almost completely effaced herself in the effort to arrive at a true understanding of life. It is in this sense again that the human document rivals the work of art, or in times such as ours, *replaces* the work of art. For, in a profound sense, this *is* the work of art which never gets written --- because the artist whose task it is to create it never gets born. We have here, instead of the consciously or technically finished work (which to-day seems to us more than ever empty and illusory), the unfinished symphony which achieves consummation because each line is pregnant with a soul struggle. The conflict with the world takes place within. It matters little, for the artist's purpose, whether the

world be the size of a pinhead or an incommensurable universe. *But there must be a world!* And this world, whether real or imaginary, can only be created out of despair and anguish. For the artist there is no other world. Even if it be unrecognizable, this world which is created out of sorrow and deprivation is true and vital, and eventually it expropriates the 'other' world in which the ordinary mortal lives and dies. It is the world in which the artist has his being, and it is in the revelation of his undying self that art takes its stance. Once this is apprehended there can be no question of monotony or fatigue, of chaos or irrevelance. We move amid boundless horizons in a perpetual state of awe and humility. We enter, with the author, into unknown worlds, and we share with the latter all the pain, beauty, terror and illumination which exploration entails.

Of the truly great authors no one has ever complained that they over-elaborated. On the contrary, we usually bemoan the fact that there is nothing further left us to read. And so we turn back to what we have and we re-read, and as we re-read we discover marvels which previously we had ignored. We go back to them again and again, as to inexhaustible wells of wisdom and delight. Almost invariably, it is curious to note, these authors of whom I speak are observed to be precisely those who have given us *more* than the others. They claim us precisely because we sense in them an unquenchable flame. Nothing they wrote seems to us insignificant --- not even their notes, their jottings, not

even the designs which they scribbled unconsciously in the margins of their copy books. Whereas with the meagre spirits everything seems superflous, themselves as well as the works they have given us.

At the bottom of this relentless spirit of elaboration is care --- *Sorgen*. The diarist in particular is obsessed with the notion that everything must be preserved. And this again is born out of a sense of destiny. Not only, as with the ordinary artist, is there the tyrannical desire to immortalize one's self, but there is also the idea of immortalizing the world in which the diarist lives and has his being. Everything must be recorded because everything must be preserved. In the diary of Anaïs Nin there is a kind of desperation, almost like that of a shipwrecked sailor thrown up on a desert island. From the flotsam and jetsam of her wrecked life the author struggles to create anew. It is a heart-breaking effort to recover a lost world. It is not, as some might imagine, a deliberate retreat from the world; it is an involuntary separation from the world! Everyone experiences this feeling in more or less degree. Everyone, whether consciously or unconsciously, is trying to recover the luxurious, effortless sense of security which he knew in the womb. Those who are able to realize themselves do actually achieve this state; not by a blind, unconscious yearning for the uterine condition, but by transforming the world in which they live into a veritable womb. It is this which seems to have terrified Aldous Huxley, for example, when standing before El Greco's painting, 'The Dream of Philip the 2nd'. Mr.

Huxley was terrified by the prospect of a world converted into a fish-gut. But El Greco must have been supremely happy inside his fish-gut world, and the proof of his contentment, his ease, his satisfaction, is the world-feeling which his pictures create in the mind of the spectator. Standing before his paintings one realizes that *this is a world!* One realizes also that it is a world dominated by vision. It is no longer a man looking *at* the world, but a man inside his own world ceaselessly reconstructing it in terms of the light within. That it is a world englobed, that El Greco seems to Aldous Huxley, for example, much like a Jonah in the belly of the whale, is precisely the comforting thing about El Greco's vision. The lack of a boundless infinity, which seems so to disturb Mr. Huxley, is on the contrary a most beneficent state of affairs. Everyone who has assisted at the creation of a world, any one who has made a world of his own, realizes that it is precisely the fact that his world has definite limits which is what is good about it. One has first to lose himself to discover the world of his own, the world which, because it is rigidly limited, permits the only true condition of freedom.

Which brings us back to the labyrinth and the descent into the womb, into the night of primordial chaos in which 'knowledge is refunded into ignorance'. This laborious descent into the infernal regions is really the initiation for the final descent into the eternal darkness of death. He who goes down into the labyrinth must first strip himself of all possessions, as well as of prejudices, notions, ideals, ideas, and so on. He must

return into the womb naked as the day he was born, with only the core of his future self, as it were. No one, of course, offers himself up to this experience unless he is harried by vision. The vision is first and foremost, always. And this vision is like the voice of conscience itself. It is a double vision, as we well know. One sees forwards and backwards with equal clarity. But one does not see what is directly under the nose; one does not see the world which is immediately about. This blindness to the everyday, to the normal or abnormal circumstances of life, is the distinguishing feature of the restless visionary. The eyes, which are unusually endowed, have to be trained to see with normal vision. Superficially this sort of individual seems to be concerned only with what is going on about him; the daily communion with the diary seems at first blush to be nothing more than a transcription of this normal, trivial, everyday life. And yet nothing can be further from the truth. The fact is that this extraordinary cataloguing of events, objects, impressions, ideas, etc., is only a keyboard exercise, as it were, to attain the faculty of seeing what is so glibly recorded. Actually, of course, few people in this world see what is going on about them. Nobody really sees until he understands, until he can create a pattern into which the helter-skelter of passing events fits and makes a significance. And for this sort of vision a personal death is required. One has to be able to see first with the eyes of a Martian, or a Neptunian. One has to have this extraodinary vision, this clairvoyance, to be able to take in the

multiplicity of things with ordinary eyes. Nobody sees with his eyes alone; we see with our souls. And this problem of putting the soul into the eye is the whole problem of a diarist such as Anaïs Nin. The whole vast diary, regarded from this angle, assumes the nature of the record of a second birth. It is the story of death and transfiguration.

Or one might put it still more figuratively and say it was the story of an egg which was splitting in two, that this egg went down into the darkness to become a new single egg made of the ingredients of the old. The diary then resembles a museum in which the world that made up the old split egg goes to pieces. Superficially it would seem as though every crumbling bit had been preserved in the pages of the diary. Actually not a crumb remains; everything that made up the former world not only goes to pieces but is devoured again, re-digested and assimilated in the growth of a new entity, the new egg which is one and indivisible. This egg is indestructible, and forms a vital component element of that world which is constantly in the making. It belongs not to a personal world, but to the cosmic world. In itself it has very definite limits, as has the atom or the molecule. But taken in relation with other similar identities it forms or helps to form a universe which is truly limitless. It has a spontaneous life of its own which knows a true freedom because its life is lived in accordance with the most rigid laws. The whole process does, indeed, seem to be that union with nature of which the poets speak. But this union is achieved parabolically, through a

spiritual death. It is the same sort of transfiguration which the myths relate of; it is what makes intelligible to us such a phrase as 'the spirit which animates a place'. Spirit, in taking possession of a place, so identifies itself with it that the natural and divine coalesce.

It is in this same way that human spirits take possession of the earth. It is only in the understanding of this, which by some is considered miraculous, that we can look without the least anguish upon the deaths of millions of fellow men. For we do distinguish not only between the loss of a near one and a stranger, but also, and how much more, between the loss of a near one and the loss of a great personality, a Christ, a Buddah, or a Mahomet. We speak of them, quite naturally, as though they never had died, as though they were still with us, in fact. What we mean is that they have so taken possession of the world that not even death can dislodge them. Their spirit does truly pass into the world and animate it. And it is only the animation of such spirits which gives to our life on earth significance. But all these figures had to die first in the spirit. All of them renounced the world first. That is the cardinal fact about them.

In the later volumes of the diary we note the appearance of titles. For instance, and I give them in chronological order, the following: 'The Definite Disappearance of the Demon'; 'Death and Disintegration'; 'The Triumph of White Magic'; 'The Birth of Humor in the Whale': 'Playing at Being God'; 'Fire'; 'Audace';

'Vive la Dynamite'; 'A God who Laughs'. The use of titles to indicate the nature of a volume is an indication of the gradual emergence from the labyrinth. It means that the diary itself has undergone a radical transformation. No longer a fleeting panorama of impressions, but a consolidation of experience into little bundles of fibre and muscle which go to make up the new body. The new being is definitely born and travelling upward towards the light of the everyday world. In the previous volumes we had the record of the struggle to penetrate to the very sanctum of the self; it is a description of a shadowy world in which the outline of people, things and events becomes more and more blurred by the involutional inquisition. The further we penetrate into the darkness and confusion below, however, the greater becomes the illumination. The whole personality seems to become a devouring eye turned pitilessly on the self. Finally there comes the moment when this individual who has been constantly gazing into a mirror sees with such blinding clarity that the mirror fades away and the image rejoins the body from which it had been separated. It is at this point that normal vision is restored and that the one who had died is restored to the living world. It is at this moment the prophecy which had been written twenty years earlier comes true --- '*Un de ces jours je pourrais dire: mon journal, je suis arrivee au fond!*'

Whereas in the earlier volumes the accent was one of sadness, of disillusionment, of being *de trop*, now the accent becomes one of joy and fulfillment. Fire, audacity,

dynamite, laughter --- the very choice of words is sufficient to indicate the changed condition. The world spreads out before her like a banquet table: something to *enjoy*. But the appetite, seemingly insatiable, is controlled. The old obsessional desire to devour everything in sight in order that it be preserved in her own private tomb is gone. She eats now only what nourishes her. The once ubiquitous digestive tract, the great whale into which she had made herself, is replaced by other organs with other functions. The exaggerated sympathy for others which had dogged her every step diminishes. The birth of a sense of humor denotes the achievement of an objectivity which alone the one who has realized himself attains. It is not indifference, but toleration. The totality of vision brings about a new kind of sympathy, a free, non-compulsive sort. The very pace of the diary changes. There are now long lapses, intervals of complete silence in which the great digestive apparatus, once all, slows up to permit the development of complementary organs. The eye, too, seems to close, content to let the body *feel* the presence of the world about, rather than pierce it with a devastating vision. It is no longer a world of black and white, of good and evil, or harmony and dissonance; no, now the world has at last become an orchestra in which there are innumerable instruments capable of rendering every tone and colour, an orchestra in which even the most shattering dissonances are resolved into meaningful expression. It is the ultimate poetic world of *As Is*. The inquisition is over, the trial and torture finished.

A state of absolution is reached. This is the true catholicism of which the Catholics know nothing. This is the eternally abiding world which those in search of never find. For with most of us we stand before the world as before a mirror; we never see our true selves because we can never come before the mirror unawares. We see ourselves as actors, but the spectacle for which we are rehearsing is never put on. To see the true spectacle, finally to participate in it, one must die before the mirror in a blinding light of realization. We must lose not only the mask and the costume, but the flesh and bone which conceals the secret self. This we can only do by illumination, by voluntarily going down into death. For when this moment is attained we who imagined that we were sitting in the belly of the whale and doomed to nothingness suddenly discover that the whale was a projection of our own insufficiency. The whale remains, but the whale becomes the whole wide world, with stars and seasons, with banquets and festivals, with everything that is wonderful to see and touch, and being that it is no longer a whale but something nameless because something that is inside as well as outside us. We may, if we like, devour the whale, too --- piecemeal, throughout eternity. No matter how much is ingested there will always remain more whale than man; because what man appropriates of the whale returns to the whale again in one form or another. The whale is constantly being transformed as man himself becomes transformed. There is nothing but man and whale, and the man is *in* the whale and pos-

sesses the whale. Thus, too, whatever waters the whale inhabits man inhabits also, but always as the inner inhabitant of the whale. Seasons come and go, whale-like seasons, in which the whole organism of the whale is affected. Man, too, is affected, as that inner inhabitant of the whale. But the whale never dies, nor does man inside him, because that which they have established together is undying --- their relationship. And it is in this that they live, through and by which they live: not the waters, nor the seasons, nor that which is swallowed nor that which passes away. In this passing beyond the mirror, as it were, there is an infinity wihch no infinity of images can give the least idea of. One lives within the spirit of transformation and not in the act. The legend of the whale thus becomes the celebrated book of transformations destined to cure the ills of the world. Each man who climbs into the body of the whale and works therein his own resurrection is bringing about the miraculous transfiguration of the world which, because it is human, is none the less limitless. The whole process is a marvellous piece of dramatic symbolism whereby he who sat facing his doom suddenly awakes and lives, and through the mere act of declaration --- the act of declaring his livingness --- causes the whole world to become alive and endessly alter its visage. He who gets up from his stool in the body of the whale automatically switches on an orchestral music which causes each living member of the universe to dance and sing, to pass the endless time in endless recreation.

And here I must return once again to El Greco's

'Dream of Philip the 2nd', which Mr. Huxley so well describes in his little essay. For in a way this diary of Anaïs Nin is also a curious dream of something or other, a dream which takes place fathoms deep below the surface of the sea. One might think that in this retreat from the daylight world we are about to be ushered into an hermetically sealed laboratory in which only the ego flourishes. Not at all. The ego, indeed, seems to disappear completely amidst the furniture and trappings of this subterranean world which she has created about her. A thousand figures stalk the pages, caught in their most intimate poses and revealing themselves as they never reveal themselves in the mirror. The most dramatic pages are those perhaps in which the gullible psychoanalysts, thinking to unravel the complexities of her nature, are themselves unravelled and left dangling in a thousand shreds. Everyone who comes under her glance is lured, as it were, into a spider web, stripped bare, dissected, dismembered, devoured and digested. All without malice! Done automatically, as a part of life's processes. The person who is doing this is really an innocent little creature tucked away in the lining of the belly of the whale. In nullifying herself she really becomes this great leviathan which swims the deep and devours everything in sight. It is a strange *dedoublement* of the personality in which the crime is related back to the whale by a sort of self-induced amnesia. There, tucked away in a pocket of the great intestinal tract of the whale, she dreams away throughout whole volumes of something which is not the whale, of something

greater, something beyond which is nameless and unseizable. She has a little pocket mirror which she tacks up on the wall of the whale's intestinal gut, and into which she gazes for hours on end. The whole drama of her life is played out before the mirror. If she is sad the mirror reflects her sadness; if she is gay the mirror reflects her gaiety. But everything the mirror reflects is false, because the moment she realizes that her image is sad or gay she is no longer sad or gay. Always there is another self which is hidden from the mirror and which enables her to look at herself in the mirror. This other self tells her that it is only her image which is sad, only her image which is gay. By looking at herself steadily in the mirror she really accomplishes the miracle of not looking at herself. The mirror enables her to fall into a trance in which the image is completely lost. The eyes close and she falls backward into the deep. The whale, too, falls backward and is lost into the deep. This is the dream which El Greco dreamed that Philip the 2nd dreamed. It is the dream of a dream, just as a double mirror would reflect the image of an image. It can as well be the dream of a dream of a dream, or the image of an image of an image. It can go back like that endlessly, from one little Japanese box into another and another and another without ever reaching the last box. Each lapse backward brings about a greater clairvoyance; as the darkness increases the inner eye develops in magnitude. The world is boxed off and with it the dreams that shape the world. There are endless trapdoors, but no exits. She falls from one level to another,

but there is never a final ocean floor. The result is often a sensation of brillant crystalline clarity, the sort of frozen wonder which the metamorphosis of a snowflake awakens. It is something like what a molecule would experience in decomposing into its basic elements, if it had the ability to express its awareness of the transformation going on. It is the nearest thing to ultimate sensation without completely losing identity. In the ordinary reader it is apt to produce a sensation of horror. He will find himself suddenly slipping into a world of monstrous crimes committed by an angel who is innocent of the knowledge of crime. He will be terrified by the mineralogical aspect of these crimes in which no blood is spilt, no wounds left unhealed. He will miss the normally attendant elements of violence and so be utterly confounded, utterly hallucinated.

There are some volumes, in which attention is focussed almost entirely on one or two individuals, which are like the raw pith of some post-Dostoievskian novel; they bring to the surface a lunar plasm which is the logical fruit of that drive towards the dead slag of the ego which Dostoievski heralded and which D.H. Lawrence was the first to have pointed out in precise language. There are three successive volumes, of this sort, which are made of nothing but this raw material of a drama which takes place entirely within the confines of the female world. It is the first female writing I have ever seen: it rearranges the world in terms of female honesty. The result is a language which is ultra-modern and yet bears no resemblance to any of the masculine

experimental processes with which we are familiar. It is precise, abstract, cloudy and unseizable. There are larval thoughts not yet divorced from their dream content, thoughts which seem to crystallize slowly before your eyes, always precise but never tangible, never once arrested so as to be grasped by the mind. It is the opium world of woman's physiological being, a sort of cinematic show put on inside the genito-urinary tract. There is not an ounce of man-made culture in it; everything related to the head is cut off. Time passes, but it is not clock time; nor is it poetic time such as men create in their passion. It is more like that æonic time required for the creation of gems and precious metals; an embowelled sidereal time in which the female knows that she is superior to the male and will eventually swallow him up again. The effect is that of starlight carried over into day-time.

The contrast between this language and that of man's is forcible; the whole of man's art begins to appear like a frozen edelweiss under a glass bell reposing on a mantelpiece in the deserted home of a lunatic. In this extraordinary unicellular language of the female we have a blinding, gem-like consciousness which disperses the ego like star-dust. The great female corpus rises up from its sleepy marine depths in a naked push towards the sun. The sun is at zenith --- permanently at zenith. Space broadens out like a cold Norwegian lake choked with ice-floes. The sun and moon are fixed, the one at zenith, the other at nadir. The tension is perfect, the polarity absolute. The voices of the earth

mingle in an eternal resonance which issues from the delta of the fecundating river of death. It is the voice of creation which is constantly being drowned in the daylight frenzy of a man-made world. It comes like the light breeze which sets the ocean swaying; it comes with a calm, quiet force which is irresistible, like the movement of the great Will gathered up by the instincts and rippling out in long silky flashes of enigmatic dynamism. Then a lull in which the mysterious centralized forces roll back to the matrix, gather up again in a sublime all-sufficiency. Nothing lost, nothing used up, nothing relinquished. The great mystery of conservation in which creation and destruction are but the antipodal symbols of a single constant energy which is inscrutable.

It is at this point in the still unfinished symphony of the diary that the whole pattern wheels miraculously into another dimension; at this point that it takes its cosmic stance. Adopting the universal language the human in her speaks straight out from under the skin to Hindu, Chinaman, Jap, Abyssinian, Malay, Turk, Arab, Tibetan, Eskimo, Pawnee, Hottentot, Bushman, Kaffir, Persian, Assyrian. The fixed polar language known to all races: a serpentine, sybilline, sibilant susurrus that comes up out of the astral marshes: a sort of cold, tinkling, lunar laughter which comes from under the soles of the feet: a laughter made of alluvial deposit, of mythological excrement and the sweat of epileptics. This is the language which seeps through the frontiers of race, color, religion, sex; a language which soaks through the

litmus paper of the mind and saturates the quintessential human spores. The language of bells without clappers, heard incessantly throughout the nine months in which everyone is identical and yet mysteriously different. In this first tinkling melody of immortality lapping against the snug and cozy walls of the womb we have the music of the still-born sons of men opening their lovely dead eyes one upon another.

ORCHESTRA

by

ANAIS NIN

We looked at each other as if we were listening to music, not as if we were saying words. Inside both our heads, as we sat there, there was a concert going on. Two boxes filled with the resonances of an orchestra. A hundred instruments playing all at once. Two long spools of flute-threads interweaving between his past and mine, the strings of the violin constantly trembling like the strings inside of our bodies, the nerves never still, the heavy poundings on the drum like the heavy pounding of sex, the throb of blood, the beat of desire which drowned all the vibrations, louder than any instrument, the harp singing god, god, god and the angels, the purity in his brow, the clarity in his eyes, god, god, Isolina with auburn hair, and the drums pounding desire at the temples. The orchestra all in one voice now, for an instant, in love, in love with the harp singing god, and the violins shaking their hair and I passing the violin bow gently between my legs, drawing music out of my body, my body foaming, the harp singing god while all the women of the world lay under him in a ritual of fecundation, the drum beating,

beating sex, and pollen inside of the violin cases, the curves of the violin case and the curves of women's buttocks, cries of the cello, the cello singing a dirge under the level of tears, through subterrannean roads with notes twinkling right and left, notes like stairways to the harp singing god, god, god, and the faun through the flute mocking the notes grown black and penitent, the black notes ascending the dust route of the cello's tears, an earth tremor slitting the music in two fallen walls, the walls of our faith, the cello weeping, and the violins trembling, the beat of sex breaking through the middle and splitting the white notes and the black notes apart, and the piano's stairway of sounds rolling down into the inferno of silence because far away, behind and beyond the violins comes the second voice of the orchestra, the voice out of the bellies of the instruments, underneath the notes pressed by hot fingers, in opposition to these notes comes the song from the bellies of the instruments, out of the pollen they contain, out of the wind of passing fingers, the carpet of notes mourn with voices of black lace and dice on telegraph wires. His sadnesses locked in the cello, our dreams wrapped in dust inside of the piano box, this box on our heads cracking with resonances, the past singing, an orchestra splitting with fullness, lost loves, faces vanishing, jealousy twisting like cancer, eating the flesh, the letter that never came, the kiss that was not exchanged, the harp singing god, god, god, who laughs on one side of his face, god was the man with a wide mouth who could have eaten me whole, singing inside the boxes of our heads.

Friends, treacheries, ecstasies. The voice that carried us into serenity, the voices that made the drum beat in us, sex, sex, sex, sex, desire, the bow of the violins passing between the legs, the curves of women's backs yielding, the baton of the orchestra leader, the second voice of locked instruments, the strings snapping, our faith snapping, the dissonances, the hardness, the flute weeping.

We danced because we were sad, we danced all through our life because we were sad, and the golden top inside of us made the notes turn, the white and the black, the words we wanted to hear, the words we heard, the new faces of the world turning black and white, ascending and descending, up and down askew stairways from the bellies of the cello full of salted tears, the water heaving when the violins sang together, the sea coming on us, the sea of forgetfulness, yesterday grinning through the bells and the castanets, and today a single note all alone, like our fear of solitude and our love of solitude, quarrelling, the orchestra taking our whole being together and lifting us clear out of the earth where pain is a long smooth song that does not cut through the flesh, where love is one long smooth note like the wind at night, no blood-shedding knife to its touch, the touch of music from distance far beyond the orchestra which answered the harp, the flute, the cello, the violins, the echoes on the roof, the taste on the roof of our palate, music in the tongue, in the fingers, when the fingers seek the flesh, the red pistil of desire in the fingers on the violin cords, and all desire mounting in space to fall again on the bellies, the bellies

of women he fingered like a musician, their cries rising and falling with the heaving wind of the question marked opening of the cello, borne on the orchestra's wings, and hurt and wounded by its knowledge of me, for thus we cried, thus we laughed like the bells and the castanets, thus we rolled from black to white stairways, from bodies rolling to bodies erect and dreaming spirals of desire and spirals of liberation from desire, *where is serenity?*

All our forces at work together, our fingers playing, our voices, our heads cracking with fullness of sound, crescendo of exaltation and confusion, the chaos, the fullness, no time to gather all the notes together, sitting in a hall inside the spider web of our past, the failures, the defeats, I writing a diary like a perpetual obsessional song, and he and I dancing with gold tipped cigarettes, wrinkless clothes, vanity and worship, faith and doubt, losing our blood slowly from too much love, love a wound in us, too many delicacies, too many thoughts around it, too many vibrations, fatigue, nervousness, the orchestra of our desires splitting with its many faces, sad songs, god songs, sex song, quest and hunger, idealization and cynicism, humor in the gaping split open face of the trombone swollen with laughter. Walls falling under the pressure of will, walls of the absolute falling with each part of us breathing music into instruments, our arms waving, our voice, our love, our hatred, an orchestra of conflicts, a theme of disease, the song of pain, the song of strings that are never still, for after the orchestra is still the echoes

last in our heads, the concert is eternal, the solo is a delusion, the others wait behind one to accompany, to stifle, to silence, to drown, and with this singing of feet, head, tongue, sex, this dismembering to pass into the everywhere, trains moving, bodies separating, arms and legs melting together like the spires of cathedrals, drinking life, music spilling out from the eyes in place of tears, music spilling from the throat in place of words, music falling from his finger tips in place of caresses, music exchanged between us instead of love, yearning on five lines, the five lines of our thoughts, our reveries, our emotions, our unknown self, our giant self, our shadow.

The key sitting ironically, half a question mark, like our knowledge of destiny. But I sat on five lines, cursing the world for the shocks, loving the world because it had jaws, weeping at the absolute unreachable, the fifth line and the fifth voice saying always: have faith, even curses make music. Five lines running together with simultaneous song.

The poverty, the broken hairbrush, the Alice blue gown, twilight of sensations, musique ancienne, objects floating. One line saying all the time I believe in god, in a god, in a father who will lean over and understand all things; *I need absolution*, I believe in others purity and I find myself never pure enough; *I need absolution.* Another line on which I was making colored dresses, colorful houses, and dancing. On the top line I danced with a feather on my hat. Underneath ran the line of disease, doubt, life is a danger, life with sharp edges,

life singing mockery with an evil mouth, or life slobbering, or mouths spitting insults. Everything lived out simultaneously, the love, the impulse, the doubt of the love, the ecstasy, the knowledge of the love's death, the love of living, the knowledge and awareness of its death germ, everything like an orchestra, laments, cries of joy, songs of other worlds, reveries, songs of realities. The song of a soup steaming in the center of a table, or the song of engraved and delicate silverware on lace tablecloths, the song of lace and snow melting in the gutters of New York, the key sitting at the top, ironic, while five lines of thought sang together: can we live in rhythm, my father? can we feel in rhythm, my father? can we think in rhythm, my father?

Music a moving van on cobblestones, hammer blows on the temple, a monument of asterisks, a cemetery of lost hairs, the hair fallen on the brush, fingers running up and down the hair, sailors up and down the mast, a swelling of sails. Hail on tin roofs, the Sacred Lake of Poschkar ululating, the stones of Viharas rolling, the subterranean temples of Elephanta disgorging chants and incense. Delphos and Eleusis. I lay between sky and earth, a fully stretched compass.

Earth again, and the grain of dust in the wheel.

Stop . . .

Full stop because of the grain of dust in the wheel.

THE WEATHER PAPER

29 Weather Notes

by

MICHÆL FRÆNKEL

I

1. Life is real as there is the sense of death. For with the sense of death you are aware of time, if but for one brief moment at a time --- when it *stops*. Kill the sense of death, and time goes on forever. There is no break between past and present; you appropriate the entire future and react to it as if it were the present. You plan, act, and live fifty, a hundred years ahead, as if you would never die. You become *immortal in death*. The sense of death, and hence of time, drop out of consciousness. You have now only the *illusion* of life.

II. Death is traversed somewhere. One moves *toward* it or *away* from it. Time is the movement *toward* death: you move slowly or quickly depending on how intensely you live. You arrive --- or depart --- and there is your life time (as opposed to calendar time) twenty or forty, or whatever age you are when you reach the boundary. Sometimes --- the present, for example --- you steal over the boundary, like the cat with seven lives. You are on

the other side of death: you have lost the sense of time; you move *away* from death, into *timelessness*.[1] You are on the other side of death: you move *away* from death, into *timelessness*; you have lost the sense of time.

For every cat that dies there is another that goes on. The cat: the cipher in *statistical immortality*.[2] There is the other, the classic, immortality that we should like to attain without crossing the boundary. It is the myth.[3]

III. We no longer have the strength to die before ourselves.[4] Maybe I'll wake up dead tomorrow: it is the hope by which one lives: and a permanent debt to biology. One is hostage to Providence. The will to die is not one's own, and death comes with the days and seasons, is accomplished biologically: and likewise, life.

Whatever way we take with the season is the bastard way.[5] It leads into statistical immortality. It is destined;

1. *Timelessness* as opposed to *time*.
2. "*Statistical Immortality*", "*immortality*" and "*biological death*" are used synonymously.
3. Clas ic immortality is not considered in this paper.
4. The distinction implied is between death as a conscious personal phenomenon, and biological death or immortality. If the language is puzzling, consider the following: John died before his father. John died before himself.
5. For a fuller significance of the conception "bastard way" the reader is referred to the author's "Bastard Death," Carrefour, 1936.

destined by a spiritual law as inexorable as the law of gravitation: spiritual entropy. There is a gradual wearing down, wasting, levelling to biological necessity. In this spiritual suicide the individual has no hand; it is enacted despite him.

IV. To the very young child death is a journey, an absence. It has not yet acquired the sense of time. It moves in and with the immortality bequeathed to it at birth. It is only at adolescence that by a process of the sympathetic imagination its time-sense is aroused. The young man comes up in the world and enacts his first joust de combat: he *stops* time. Now the world is real --- what's inside him, not the paste-and card-board world of sense and touch.

We have lost the time-sense and reverted to the condition of the child.[6]

II

V. In the sex act there is hunger (biology) and creative awareness (time-sense). The first is nature driving toward biological death, *beyond* and *away* from time;[7] the second is man seeking to preserve his individual identity, in the face of biology, fighting against

6. It is in its characteristic impairment or loss of the sense of time that senescence resembles childhood. To old age also, death comes to stand more and more for a journey or absence. In this sense it may be said with equal truth that we have entered on the stage of senility.
7. As in the case of certain animals and insects that die with the consummation of copulation.

the current of timelessness that threatens to carry him down to the eternal sea, the matrix of all time.[8]

These drives are the prime, root symbols of life. They are the Janus-mould on which we fashion all our activity, whether in the dream or waking life. Thus pulling out of the sex-act alive is the root victory, the root symbol of all of man's victories: he has come face to face with biology, and mastered it, thereby renewing the sources of adolescent spring, when he first threw off the burden of *immortality* and became a hero, i.e. became aware of time.

VI. When the time-sense drops out of consciousness, man yields in the sex-act to biology and moves with it into *biological death*. He is tired; he does not care to be a hero any more. One seeks the long death: it is in the blood now, with the air and the season. The Janus-face of sex is transposed; the face with which the sex-act confronts us now is the biological one, the death mask; the other face, the heroic one in creative awareness, is relegated permanently to the rear. But the actual outcome is the source of all our despair. For one still emerges from the sex-act *alive:* the death-wish is frustrated. To be borne on the universal death stream, so pleasantly, so effortlessly, and then suddenly to find oneself rudely back in life. To miss death by a hair's breadth! It *is* exasperating! But no matter: we have

8. This double aspect in sex is mirrored in such conceptions as event and deed; chronology and history; reality and over-reality, etc.

been tainted: we have known death at the heart. Life is now in the nature of a back-current, a backwash from death.*9*

With the psychic configuration in sex the death-wish, the sex act ceases to act as the root symbol of our conquest over biology, but serves as an ever-potent reminder of how we live, *despite ourselves;* the tragic reminder of our frustrated death-wish. All the activities of our waking life henceforth betray this death-frustration; the same weave---an inner wasting, running down, a spiritual suicide enacted within us from which we are shut out actively. And because, like the hands of a clock, the movement is so slow, living goes on as usual, and we tell the time, not knowing that it is always later than we think.

We nibble at time, locust-like, so that we find ourselves always in the moment about to pass. We move into the future so gradually, so imperceptibly, we are standing still. For it is only by the forward *leap* from the present into the future, as we *hurdle* the immediate and embrace the unknown, that we know we have moved, that we know the present. That is how we are aware of things, by leaving them, suddenly, immoderately. By heroism.

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9. After all, where we stand is important only as an orienting point. Death may be everywhere. The important thing is how we came where we are, and are what we are, whether by heroism, or biology. In the first instance we are in life; in the second in death.

VII. *The world as will to suicide:* everywhere now man enacts the counterpart of the prime tragic symbol. The new architecture springs up of beliefs, governments, states, arts, economics, morals, wars, marriage, family, etc.

We have entered the new weather.

III

VIII. Before the new weather settles down, there is always the choice --- between the conscious individual end (creative suicide) and the gradual running down, unwinding (biology). With the passionately creative spirit the choice is inevitable, and quickly made. He knows what time it is; and what it means to be late. Against Mohammed, he maintains: "*There shall be time!*" If with and in this last act! The others wait --- and how short the time is --- and lo, the miracle! The cat jumps death. The fatal boundary has been crossed: we are on the other side of death. Our last strength is spent; we stand empty-handed: the world and ourselves running through us as through a sieve. Biology from now on accomplishes for us what we had no strength to do ourselves, while there was still time. The long weather sets in, with the slow wasting and corroding in the blood, the brain cells crumbling, falling in an endless dribble to the basin of the stomach, the thinking stomach . . . The roof rots over the head and the wind whistles through the eternal sluice.

IX. We should not confuse the *creative* with the *psychopathic* suicide. The one *wills* suicide; the other is

suicide. The psychopath walks into a tree and crashes his skull. His walking into the tree and crashing his skull bears the same internal relation to his disintegration as his suicide. Both conditions are unconscious, without choice or individual direction; both part of the disease. The *creative suicide* is a last act of creative volition. *Rimbaud leaves poetry for Africa, the possibility of poem being exhausted for him: it is his last poem. The later poet neither writes his poem nor goes to Africa: he kills the actor, the possibility of both Africa and poem being exhausted: this is also a poem.*

IV

x. Death weather: on the active side, *fair and violent;* on the contemplative, wet and fizzling. The new dramaturgy of human relalations springs up --- between states, governments, peoples, individuals, between the ruling and ruled, between man and woman. The dramaturgy of violence: the simplest, quickest, cleanest way of "getting over with it." ("Giving the show the works.")[10] The new tension appears, *of the moment*

10. Such laconic phrases as "to work to death," "to drink to death," "to play to death," "to dance to death," "to f - - - to death" are all expressions of the inmost spirit of the time. With respect to all of them, it is noteworthy that they no longer relate back to an art of living but are directed purely toward detente --- absolute and final release. How significant is the American phrase "making a killing" referring to a business coup!

before the last, the blind, desperate rush for the exit which is the counterpart of the sexual climax at the root of the altered sex symbol.[11] The moment before the presses begin grinding out the news, the moment before the cabinet falls, or the great merger is signed or the army moved --- the tension is the same. The new ethos is in the imminent sense of finality. In varying degrees the other daily activities are duplicates of *that* moment, a chain of smaller or greater tensions, culminating in the finale. There is apparently a sense of power and creative energy, but it is only ejaculatory impatience before the wish to have it over with as soon as possible. The straining of the nerves and the glint in the eye, the desperation that knows deep inside, in the blood, that the cosmic flow can no longer be controlled! The creative will is spent.

XI. Men like Napoleon or Cromwell are men of their time, as much related to it as the falling leaf to the season or tree. The weather sheds them. The "killers" are our men of "destiny." The modern badman is the revolutionary psychopath. The difference between him and a Lenin or Hitler, say, is qualitatively the same as between the creative suicide and the psychopath's. Both stand in the same relation to the weather, only a Lenin attempts to control and direct

11. "It looks as if they can't wait a single moment before completing destruction. Bombs have been exploding about me since I arrived." --- a visitor giving her first day's impression of New York.

it and even change it, after some preconceived plan --- *inducing rain by revolution;* the other is entirely unconscious of any end or purpose --- the erratic weather-vane. Both types are heroes, *and for the same reason*, though not to the same people. When Public Enemy No. 1 goes, we have funerals of pomp and circumstance, because the imminent danger in which a man of this type moved and lived, the violent sense of drama and emotion he aroused, acts as a kind of catharsis to a populace for whom death is an ever-present need, however much they may shrink from it in reality.

XII. In every captain of industry there is the profound conflict. It is not present in a Lenin or a Public Enemy No. 1, because with the latter the expression is direct and unobstructed. In the case of the revolutionary, violence is an end in the attainment of a supposed "good," the "ideal" which is still in the future tense. In the present, in the revolutionary action as such, reality is revolution, the destruction of the old order. The death wish is not side-tracked, as in the case of the industrial leader, by the necessity inherent in industrial exploitation to serve and be useful. It is a constructive necessity which the industrialist cannot entirely ignore. In the case of the modern badman, violence is means and end. With him personal power is not a consideration, because personal power presupposes an end through which it can function, and this man has no end. On the other hand, with the captain of industry the basic motive suffers serious repression --- his efforts actually result in enhancing life,

making the world a safer, better place to live in; yet he is no exception to the latent destructive urge. Between the two forces the compulsion acts in the manner of the prosperity-depression cycle. The time comes when the man's innate nihilism revenges itself on him and society and sets the house on fire. But who does not return after the fire to save his dinner from the ashes?[12]

XIII. The disappointment most of us experience in social intercourse is that we leave as we came --- *alive*. It is generally only at the so-called wild party of the American variety that there is ever a glimmering of hope. For there men and women get together on a common level and talk the same language. Given the proper stimulants --- hard liquor, free talk and easy contact --- and you release, without knowing it, the working principle of the social order: the *suicidal*, which means by repression, the homicidal impulse. Without being aware of it, our secret hope is that our

12. The "good times" that follow each depression are always, as Marx pointed out, a little less good than the former "good times." --- If the point seems a bit labored, as it does to me, one might regard it from another angle, thus: Man gets tired cyclically; the nerve tension is too great, and he falls back exhausted. We say to take a breath. It is only the physical organism fighting helplessly to overcome the suicidal drive --- a kind of atavistic yearning for the steadier, more human pace. Thus our periodic fits of depression from which we always "recover," to take the next leap downward --- the *upward* swing of the prosperity-depression cycle --- toward death.

neighbor play the kind Samaritan --- and shoot. My neighbor, restore my pride! I am dribbling in death! ... And we wait for the moment. On the slightest provocation the hand goes to the trigger, and --- "I didn't know what I did. I did not want to kill him."[13] Misplaced sympathy ... The nose of the gun pointed in the wrong direction ... That's the "successful" party, the newspaper story of the morning after. It is here also that we still find the occasional *creative suicide*, which is growing more and more the exception every day. "He went into the bathroom and a shot was heard." The artificial tension was removed and the man came to himself.[14]

XIV. My neighbor, restore my pride! I am dribbling in death! ... Those side-long glances we throw at each other from the jagged nerve ends ... we are ashamed, afraid to look into each other's face ... A kind of new adolescent onanism. To kill ourselves daily *by our own hand*, and yet somehow survive ... This is death by proxy, by some horrible, unnatural principle. *A masturbative death*. Our pride is broken. It is worse than a broken heart .One can still live in the strength of one's own moral integrity. But with that gone, of what use is the heart?

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13. Mrs. Jesse Livermore after shooting her young son, as reported in the daily press, 1935.

14. The suicidal impulse assumes all sorts of threshold or intermediary expressions, as in popular games --- note the underlying sense of violence in the frequent gags about bridge, or the desperate politeness in the mildest game of all --- passing the conversational ball.

Of what use is the heart? We smile desperately at the tender emotions. We prefer to erect an artificial structure on mental concepts which at the slightest wheering of the wind tumbles like a house of cards. It is a cardboard structure unrelated to basic roots in the affective consciousness, and integrated to reality only as a kind of counter-weather charm. Only the basic revulsion stays deep down. Get close enough to your neighbor --- the stink! When contact with one's neighbor arouses such reaction you have to train yourself to love. Love ye one another --- it is no longer an emotional holiday. It is a plain duty. Social and business intercourse have adopted it out of sheer necessity.

xv. The modern dramatist has this acute problem on his hands --- how to get his character off the stage. He is justly afraid to leave him to his own devices. He might remain before the proscenium forever! There would be little romance in that --- it would be too much like life. So he brings in the badman, the *deus ex machina* of the modern situation, who gives the character the "works." It is for this reason that the modern situation invariably degenerates into underworld melodrama, underworld tension, and underworld finale. The people be pleased. The purge is salutary. But in ordinary life we have no such double: there is very rarely such a denoument. We simply have to wait. It is only by the rarest good luck that one comes the way of a stray bullet from the gun play round the corner. Most of us have to keep our nose to the grindstone from day to day --- death a humble daily devotion.

The desire dies and the dream passes, but skull and skeleton stay. And how we dress it up, do it up in gypsum and corrosive sublimate, this empty skull and empty skeleton! A museum mummy. Clean, sanitary living, as we say. The modern art of embalming.

XVI. There is literature for *consumption* and literature for *art*. The difference between them is primarily one of accent: social or private nihilism --- grand opera or chamber suicide. The consumption author, like the banker, business man, or statesman, is merged with the common fate of the mass: by the pressure of numbers he maintains a vital point of contact with his fellow-men, reacts vitally to a common reality. He has "morale." The so-called creative artist knows no such "common" bond. He lives out his suicide phantasy privately.*15* His is a tragic lot. Though the masses, like Schopenhauer's porcupines, prick the more, the closer you get to them, they *do* keep you warm. There is an evident advantage in numbers. Our art creator neither sticks to the people nor to his own kind: the one he is afraid of, the other he is ashamed of. He hasn't fallen in line with the people, and he shares a common shame with his fellow artist. Too late! With every completed work he discovers how he has deluded and betrayed himself: *he is alive*. Rimbaud's was the last poem.*16*

XVII. *Art literature is suicide*. It is as if the content got right up from the printed page and blew its brains

15. Joyce, "Work in Progress," etc.
16. In time, of course, i.e. in the old weather.

out. The form breaks. There is nothing to hold it. Content is action, and this literature can't act --- in the sense, of course, in which any action is possible today, i.e. in the sense the politician, banker, revolutionary proletarian, or scenario writer acts. The time-old confusion persists: placing the "content" cart before the "form" horse. Form simply pulls the wagon, but when there is no wagon, you have the horse only, and the poor animal goes wild for nothing to do.[17]

XVIII. The purpose of consumption literature is to take the bad taste out of living, which is a constant necessity. By means of it the populace can take death straight.[18] There is no diluting with soul or divine intercession or spiritual grace. Just simply the "human" story culminating in the breaking, crashing end. The fact chain with which in the end the "hero" hangs himself. You see this in comparing the best of our moderns with, say, a Dostoievsky. In Dostoievsky

17. In this light can be explained the avant-guard literary movements of recent years.

18. As in sports, endurance contests, the newspaper, radio, movies, vaudeville, music hall, etc. "Encourage me further and you'll have me kill myself," the acrobat who rode all sorts of bicycles, each more dangerous than the last, pleading with his audience, after repeated and unrestrained applause. "The only thing left for us to do to entertain you is to kill ourselves" --- the leader of the jazz band appealing to the excited audience, after all the musical instruments were broken and smashed in a frenzy of cacophonic violence.

there always breaks to the surface that inexpressible spiritual something between the links of the factual chain; what we recognize as the inward relation or significance. The reader feels it though he cannot put his finger on it; he knows it is there in that intransitive sense that the breath is there when one talks. The breath is the living thing, the spiritual link, the implication, hidden, unseen, intangible. Link by link the factual chain throws off its spiritual shadow, the spiritual story. Roskolnikov commits murder --- the concatenation in fact is no different from the newspaper story. But there is the other chain which runs parallel to it --- the drama of God and the angels, the soul-searching and soul-conflict, the struggle of the personality to come into balance with himself and his crime. It is the chain which, whatever the crime, unites man in the end to divine law. In the modern novel the character commits a horrible rape, the facts are detailed with a stark desperate realism, and what? Nothing more. The factual chain in crime ends with the law --- the human law --- taking its inexorable way. The pimp remains a pimp.*19* The Dostoievsky crime moves against a background in spiritual consciousness. In the modern novel the individual crime falls back on itself and ultimately on the universal crime in which it is only a link. The world turned Popeye --- the man who rapes with a corncob. The modern murder story is just crime --- from page 1 to page n.

19. William Faulkner: Sanctuary.

V

XIX. It is difficult to get over the disappointment of the last war. It was presumably a war to end war. Instead there have been eighteen long years in which to nurse the disappointment. We are almost ready to try again now and this time, we hope, science will not betray us: there are the new long-range guns, the poison gases, the possible death rays. We are waiting.

There is no mistaking what it meant, the last abortive attempt. There may have been other motives in other wars --- Helen or Jerusalem or Christ. This one had just one --- to kill, to be killed. A difference simply in syntax. Often you could hardly distinguish between ally and enemy --- the transition from first to second person was so imperceptible. Men were thrown and huddled into trenches and dug-outs, with the one insane desire. They were oblivious to everything else. Except, of course, to hunger, which is only the other side of the same medal. The bargaining, conniving, fighting for food in the last war! History in all its sordid stretches has no parallel for it! "This sinister alchemy of hunger ... creatures, hideous and authentic, poised, cohering in a solid chaos of desire, a fluid and numerous cluster of vital inhumanity." Whom indeed were they fighting --- hunger or the enemy? It is now becoming quite obvious what the trenches said: to get back into the earth, crawl right into it, into the mother womb, drawing on the mother blood, by the simplest process of osmosis --- as a way out, as a last escape .Not

from the hell and horror of war, but the greater hell and horror of peace. For in war death comes sometimes. In peace you have to sit back and *wait* for death, no one knows how long.

VI

xx. If in any real sense we can talk of the present crisis as a "transition," we must have in mind something graver, more profound and permanent, than an interruption and readjustment simply in the normal life of nations and peoples. In the early part of 1930, the reaction among intellectuals to the use of the term "disintegration" in relation to the then prevailing state of affairs was still one of surprise and questioning. We have grown more accustomed to it since. No doubt the same creative incapacity which makes it difficult for most of us to act on the historical necessity rendered it difficult to accept the term. But without prejudice to the ultimate recuperative resources of mankind, "transition" in this connection is misleading, unless it means disintegration.

xxi. Is there a relation between a disintegrating society and the suicidal impulse? The war's prime symbol, the schizophrenic regression, prepares one for an understanding of the present-day configuration. It denotes the social weather counterpoint.

In some quarters, it is said that we are entering or have entered a new Dark Age. Unless the essential clue to a Dark Age is grasped, this will mean nothing more than what it has meant up to now --- general

decay, stagnation. This tells little. It is as we approach the altered sex symbol in relation to the decline of creative awareness (the time-sense), that we are at the heart of the problem. *The relation between a Dark Age and the suicidal impulse is primary.*

XXII. Hunger and Death: human consciousness is reduced to biologic function. The long drawn-out battle for bread begins, to continue for hundreds of years --- states and governments and peoples and individuals bargaining and fighting for bread. The present impasse cannot be solved with the solution of the economic equilibrium which has been thrown out of balance. We shall never write off our debts, by inflation or voluntary bankruptcy, or otherwise, for we have abrogated all others. They are debts to biology, and it is only as they exist at all that we are able to say "we are alive." We "live" by bread alone.[20]

XXIII. *This is the former Dark Age stood upside down.* To understand both, the key is the opposing characters of their communication mechanism. (Communication embraces all the means, physical and otherwise, a society develops and puts at the disposal of each of its members for making contact with his fellow-members.) Depending on the *degree* and *quality* of this rapport or tranference, you have a lower or higher level of society, and the varying levels in between. Evidently society

20. In the stress proletarian movements lay on the struggle for bread, they demonstrate a realism which is in complete consonance with the times.

cannot escape absolute disintegration unless *some* degree and quality of communication is maintained. The relation between creative awareness and the degree and quality of communication, and this in turn to the present Dark Age, should be evident.

XXIV. The present and the former Dark Age meet as extremes meet. Modern science has pushed communication to the back-breaking point --- where it turns upon itself, defeats itself.

In the former Dark Age physical communication was extremely limited, effected with the greatest difficulty, often over hazardous distances. Today --- thanks to invention --- so close are we to each other I do not know the neighbor on the other side of my wall; and we move so fast, I can often walk faster than ride. In the former Dark Age the economic structure was so elementary every individual was a little economic world unto himself, self-sufficient and self-contained, with little, if any, relation to the economic body as a whole. The present industrial economy, with its intense specialization, is so complex the individual is reduced to a cog in the machine, his contact with a central organizing influence almost nil. In the former Dark Age few were able to read and much less write, and there was enlightened contact only among the select few. The modern printing press (which may be taken as the best example of what has befallen in varying degrees all forms of intellectual and artistic expression) in catering to universal demand, has finally brought about a condition where only that which is universally com-

prehensible --- which is of negligible worth --- is communicable. The unique individual cannot say anything that will be universally communicable for the same reason that the average individual cannot say anything that will *not* be universally communicable. If the original thinker in his field is universally known, it is not because what he says is universally comprehended; on the contrary, it is because it is *not*. Here the news appeal of his incommunicability makes him universally known.[21] As far as an enlightened public is concerned, he might just as well not exist.

VII

xxv. For those of us who, realizing what the weather is and what side of death we find ourselves on, can no longer act on the historical necessity --- for there is one time for death --- the problem is how to get a sense of life (time) and escape statistical immortality. *Escape the death weather.*

Action is out of the question. Whether it is Liberalism or English muddling through, it is at best a compromise of which sensitive men are a bit ashamed. As for reviving the Orphic possibilities action once had, by violence, whether of the American or Russian variety --- in each case the result is only an inversion: not time, but a deeper sense of immortality. If the killings go on, we won't know that they are there for their authors: the latter, like the biological cat, are all so

21. Einstein, for example.

much alike. Likewise, the Proletarian action ultimately serves to broaden out and deepen the a-historical base of the present by setting up the struggle for bread as reality prime, and thus concealing and negating the inner devastation. By investing a means with all the primacy of an end-aim and postulating heroism in terms of it, it reveals its latent nihilism and hollowness as historical deed. The sensitive individual refrains from action, not because he is unequal to the act, but because there is no possibility of act. There is inertia --- the biologic flux.

XXVI. The still existing possibility for creativity is extremely limited --- extreme. As long as there is something to believe in, there are poems. That there is nothing more to believe in may also be a basis of faith, the possibility of a poem --- for example, the poet's suicide. But this extreme solution --- this extreme poem --- is growing more impossible every day. It is getting late. Another way out must be found. A *last* poet neither goes to Africa as a *late* poet for whom the possibility of poem has been exhausted; nor does he kill himself as a *later* poet for whom the possibility of poem *and* Africa have been exhausted: a *last* poet burrows through no-poem and no-Africa into a new poem. He pulls the present weather over him and tunnels through into a new weather. He taps a new spiritual spring as he leaves further and further behind him the one that has gone dry. You hear the rhythmic beat of his hammer going all the time --- that is, if you are a weather-prophet and keep your ear to the ground

in the true tradition. For the great majorities it passes unheard. It is the most dangerous and deadly kind of revolution, this *last* poet's action, not just homeopathic magic (Proletarian Revolution). People get up one morning to find the ground slipping under them, and unless they know how to jump onto the new terrain, they are swept down in the seismic upheaval. The last poet is the Weather Revolutionist who saves the Last Man to humanity by uncovering for him a new well-spring to slake his spiritual thirst.[22]

XXVII. Art is Dead! Long live art! ... There remains, then, for the artist who has overstayed his time and realizes that creation as an act in *living* time is no longer possible, the art morphology of the dream. It is a way of escape from statistical immortality, timelessness, by reviving through an active process of the creative memory the sense of time. For this the realization that there has been death is primary. The first reaction to reality is one of death. It gives the *first* sense of life. The object is to extend and deepen the sense of life by celebrating this death at more or less regular intervals. A constant and continuous line of memory deaths is is thus formed. Between the intervals, heading, as on the former life-line, toward death, there is a sense of time, and hence of life. It is not, to be sure, *living* time in the direction of actual death, but time by proxy, as it were, *reminiscent* time and in the direction of the next *memory* death.

22. The presumption in all this is that the weather can't kill off the poet, no matter whom else it may kill off.

XXVIII. In contemplating the past, two totally opposite principles are seen to operate. One arrests by a conscious effort of the will the time movement toward death, as a flight from life. It seeks to extend that instant when time stops and one is aware of death, to eternity: it seeks to make that instant eternity. Here death is a luxury; life the commonplace. That is Mohammed's "There shall be no more time!" In the new art the opposite principle functions: the time-movement is not arrested --- for there is no time-movement to arrest. The purpose is rather consciously and deliberately to restore through the memory the time-movement. The goal is not to escape *life*, but immortality. The goal is to get a sense of life.

XXIX. The test is how thoroughly the artist goes mad, or what sort of artist one is, *dying*. Towards this end it becomes neccessary to eschew so-called action and so-called reality. To kill the logical waking mind. To regard the world and reality from the eyes of a permanent dreamer in a continuous act of waking. This is gradually accomplished as new points of awareness spring up with and around each memory death. As experiences of this sort increase, and living assumes more and more the character of the dream with its hallucinations, pursuits, stranglings, frustrations, etc., there is a resulting sense of the inadequacy of the waking faculty. The waking dreamer becomes more and more critical of reality, as he grows more and more at home in the anarchy of the mind. In time he rids himself of the restrictions neccessary for action and earns his madness. The new Orphic myth appears with the new art of dying.

THE INDEX

by

JOHN HASTINGS

Scour the agate! Burnish the sheeny ball!
Unweb the bead of its awning! Feed
Deep on the lustrous cavern of an untold tale
And the mirroring deeps of the shadowy, unplumbed
well.

Here where the passerby bulges into the years
And the cabby droops on the shed and the street is
shining
Look! Lean over the sill and gaze!
Look! It is here the flame is breaking and climbing!

The eye! Watch! Pause in the dust, and stare!
The eye is alight and proud! The eye is alive and brave!
Fixed, a screw in the sullen skull, and ablaze
Like casements in a hovel catching the morning.

Look! It is here! The pulse and the blood are alive here!
Here the quick is triumphing over the dead!
The eye! The eye! Watch how it burns and boils!
The star in the lowering dusk! The spark in the
dwindling grate!

I am the immediate. Stand and accost me.
I am the passing instant. None has foretold me.
I leave no memoried traces save the spell
My magic minute means. Stand and address me.

The needle-prick of the flesh is here, the sting and the challenging.
Lift the refractory curtain. Do not avoid me.
The multi-syllabic clause will not save the staring.
Lift the deflected brow and gaze. And admit me.

You have heard the recondite tongue like the bell-clapper flapping,
You have pursued its ministrations and been blind.
Stop in the heat of the tournamental hour
And feast on the flashing eye and come flame and come free.

You have skirted the touch of me long and denied me long.
You have cowered the flare of your eye like a shuttered lamp.
Uncloset the quick, shamed orb and affirm.
A spark springs in the breach and the eye will tell it.

For I am the immediate. I will recite no tables.
Not till the flame predicts us will I predict us.
I am the momentary. Now and only now will you
experience me.
But the quick moment will be rich, the swift moment
will be proud.

Let the tongue in its groove assuage you.
I will not assuage you, nor be provable.
Let the amendment give respite with a precept.
I shall demand of you and invoke you.

But if you be unbrave go back to guile.
Sprawl in the fatty slough of the one-two-three.
The touch of the arteried dark is not for you.
The ill of arguable right is not for me.

Only if you be strong gaze in my eye.
Feed on the peerless deeps and the various story.
Touch the ineffable cord and wake to the tie.
The air is alive and we are not lost to glory.

IN REPLY

Not long after the first issue of *The Phœnix* had gone forth from our hands and made its way to readers scattered in various parts of America and Europe, we began to receive numerous letters --- letters ranging in tenor from those expressing varying degrees of sympathy and understanding to others voicing perplexity, suspicion, and hostility over the nature and motives of our publication.

A phœnix had arisen, and the parrot-like followers of Marx, their suspicions aroused, took a hasty retreat behind their chorus of annihilating epithets --- "escapists" ... "mystics" ... "incipient Fascists." Which finished us as far as they were concerned. The harpyish followers of Mussolini, Hitler, and the Pope, despite that we had been labelled "incipient Fascists," were just as quick to shy away and join in a queer united front with the Marxists in denouncing us. And the little doves in Capitalism's cage of Democracy, perplexed and uneasy, sent us gentle reproofs and tried to coax us in with them where we would be safe from all the wicked birds of prey.

To reply to any and all such letters would be a waste of time and energy. Worse yet, it would be an act of sheer stupidity. Because for any *intuitively aware* man or woman it is enough just to see the faces of the leaders of such people. Call them up before your mind's eye: Stalin, Trotsky, Hitler, Mussolini, the Pope, on down the line past all the Chamberlains, Daladiers, Roosevelts, Landons, Hoovers, etc. etc. --- *and imagine any man or woman of integrity choosing or accepting any one of these men for a leader.* Ugh!

No, any man or woman who is true to the unutterably proud, sacred meaning of *manhood* and *womanhood* would instinctively recoil from all such leaders. For they are all *death* leaders and can only lead their followers, with varying degrees of boldness or cowardice, towards an ultimate insane, suicidal exit from the stifling tomb of this Judaic-Christian civilization.

And yet, dreadful as it may sound, such death leaders seem to fill a deep, *unconscious* need in mankind to-day. Because for the mass of men and women trapped in this tomb of living-death, *physical* death *is* the only way out. They've long ago died spiritually, and so they're no longer *inwardly* sustained and nourished. They've lost their true manhood and womanhood. No man whose spirit blazed fiercely and proudly within him would submit to the degradation and shame of a life given over to a factory or business office. Nor any woman. But the mass of men and women have been betrayed and have not had the strength and courage to cast off the betrayal. And no wonder, for the betrayal

begins with the vulnerable, unprotected years of earliest childhood, and is perpetuated by parents, teachers, and priests, by church and state and nation. Only the strongest spirits can survive this terrible gauntlet. Many men are driven violently insane by it and have to be hidden away in asylums. But most men succumb into a coma, into a state of passive insanity, and emasculated of their inner pride and magic and glory, they allow themselves to be herded into the catacombs of tenements, factories, and business offices. And for such men it would be far better that they choose Mussolini or Hitler for a leader rather than Roosevelt, Chamberlain, Daladier, Stalin, or the Pope. Because the latter are all striving --- even if in differing ways --- to *prolong* the shame and horror of this civilization's living-death, while Mussolini and Hitler, like modern Attilas, at least seem to be swiftly gathering dynamite to blow the tomb to pieces.

But what about those of us who have survived the long gauntlet of betrayals and have emerged into manhood and womanhood, dazed, far scattered from one another, lost in crowds of fellow creatures who have been beaten into a terrible surrender of human pride and integrity? How shall we preserve for the sowing the seeds of a new flowering of human life which we have kept intact within the secret recesses of our hearts and souls? How shall we save ourselves from being trampled down and destroyed by the wild, suicidal stampedes of the deathward-polarized masses? To whom shall *we* turn for a leader into a way of resurrection and new life?

There is only one man to whom we can turn, only one man whose fiery spirit has blazed a way through to deliverance. And that man is D.H. Lawrence. And D.H. Lawrence is dead. But his words are not dead. His words are most vividly,magically alive, gleaming in the darkness of our tomb like stars by which to chart our course.

Alone, he went on before us and rolled aside the stone, and lo! a way out has been opened to us. And through the opening we catch glimpses and intimations of the incarnate cosmos, whose vast splendor and joy and glory and fulfillment has been so long lost to us buried here in the tomb of Judaic-Christianity. And though the way out will be strewn with innumerable hidden obstacles and perils, yet see now how the central clue of his message flashes through the opening like the Morning Star, leading us on. The Morning Star, that heralds the rising Sun.

And now it is upon us to follow our Morning Star, to follow his gleaming words out of the dead realm of books and literature into the living world of action and reality. And for this *The Phœnix* has arisen. Not to add a new literary exegesis of his works and message, not to help fill the dreary shelves of libraries and book shops. No! To hell with all the John Middling Meddling Muddling Middleton Murrys who blatantly hold up their own little stinking feeble lanterns in order to point out to the blind the Morning Star that is D.H. Lawrence. All they do is temporarily blot out of sight, for any one of us who is fool enough to go near them, his steadfast

light shining on the horizon of our future. Blot out the Morning Star and wait for us to gasp in admiration at their own ugly mugs in the lantern's sickly glow.

No, not for this has *The Phœnix* arisen. *The Phœnix* has arisen to gather together a group of men and women --- no matter how small --- who have the faith and the *daring* to translate Lawrence's words into action and reality, to follow his clue of resurrection into the living cosmos.

Which won't at all be an easy affair, a gay lark of an adventure, like acting out a novel, and then returning back into our snug little cocoons. Oh no! It will mean first of all a sad and painful tearing asunder of all bonds and ties with those who are dear to us, those who will be afraid to come along, afraid of the searing pain of coming to life again, of thawing out the numb, frozen paralysis of the tomb. And following this, it will mean innumerable unforseen physical hardships and privations and perils. For the Morning Star that is D.H. Lawrence shall lead us, with no turning back, to the far off lands of Mexico and South America, to the lands of the Aztecs, the Mayas, and the Incas ...

"Let Americans turn to America, and to that very America which has been rejected and almost annihilated. Do they want to draw sustenance for the future? They will never draw it from the lovely monuments of our European past. These have an almost fatal narcotic, dream-luxurious effect upon the soul. America must turn again to catch the spirit of her own dark, aboriginal continent.

"That which was abhorrent to the Pilgrim Fathers and to the Spaniards, that which was called the Devil, the black demon of savage America, this great aboriginal spirit the Americans must recognize again, recognize and embrace. The devil and anathema of our forefathers hides the Godhead which we seek.

"*Americans must take up life where the Red Indian, the Aztec, the Maya, the Incas left it off. They must pick up the life-thread where the mysterious Red race let it fall.*

"A great and lovely life-form, unperfected, fell with Montezuma. The responsibility for the producing and the perfecting of this life-form devolves upon the new American. It is time he accepted the full responsibility ..."

Which embodies our reply and challenge to all readers of *The Phœnix*. For no matter what else of a seemingly or actually unrelated nature appears in its pages, this is its prime and unswerving purpose: the gathering together of a group of men and women who are ready to accept the full responsibility, who will extricate themselves from whatever part of the tomb they are in, the U.$. part, or Europe, or wherever, and travel onwards to the land of the rising sun.

And if you think we are fools, fanatics, escapists, mystics, incipient or full-blown Fascists, secret agents for Stalin, Trotsky, Roosevelt, the Pope, Hitler, Mussolini, or who-not, that's allright, go ahead and think so. Only don't be so stupid as to write in and tell us. Be much simpler just not to read us. Because we have no desire to argue with you, or convert you, or save

you. Nor are we at all interested in gathering in a number of meaningless subscriptions. Which doesn't mean that we're subsidized, or have money in a bank. For we haven't. But we have got our own small press and we'll continue to manage meeting the expenses of paper and postage involved in getting out the quarterly issues of *The Phœnix*.

Until the Autumn issue, then, adios.

James P. Cooney

AMONG THE MAGAZINES

(*Starting with our following issue, which will appear in Autumn, we shall have an extensive review department dealing with books, current magazines, and recordings.*)

THE TOWNSMAN (A new English Quarterly, edited by Ronald Duncan) Vol. 1, No.1

This is the sort of magazine which one feels will soon become a collectors item --- garbage collectors.

Underneath its pretentious Englishy highbrowness, there is an unspeakable vacuity and impotence. And the disgusting feeling that one has run afoul of a nest of fags.

Cummings leads off with three of his usual jig-saw poems, strewn with dreary typewriter tricks and cute capers. Here's a typical stanza:

":nothing in any way sugge
stive
;nothing to which anyone might possibly obje
ct"

Then comes Pound, babbling his onanistic nothingnesses. Hark to him introducing eight Japanese poets of the *Vou Club* in Tokio:

"Not as translations but as *actual writing* these poems are better work save those of E. E. Cummings at his happiest ... As to their being *a* or *the* most active new club of poets in Tokio, I doubt if any one city contains two such clubs. I know that nowhere in Europe is any such vortex of poetic alertness. Tokio takes over, where Paris stopped ..."

And here is a sample from the Tokio world-forces. This one is called *PASSION*:

"Like a dying
Peacock,
In a desperate agony,
Flapping the wings,
You fold up
The gorgeous fireworks."

After the Tokio jabberings, Ronald Duncan enters upon the scene and adds to the general mess with a Poetic, oh! so Poetic, play about English miners. And the poor miners and their wives, under Duncan's creative pen and punctuation marks, God help them, have to talk like this:

"To-morrow, and to-morrow: and all the days after: may he, my boy, be able to glad to, provide for me: his: Mother."

Then Pound reappears, but let's skip him. No good, though, for we fall into Duncan's hands again. This time in an editorial, titled:

"AT THE THROAT ...

"Of Oaths, Vows, Promises and Pledges

"All four; fatuous. Indulgence in, any of, proof of, weakness, not strength. Crucifying *now* on yesterday, manifestation of mental slunkering --- thunking, not thinking ..." etc. etc.

And it all ends up: "Don't only mean the Lutherian renunciation, but all: 'I decided; I won't because I wouldn't; I will because I did,' which most of the you-arsupard idiots on yesterday's poes. Iron can be forged to iron and it'll stay put, if it's kept dry. The P. O. secures money or does something with it for a time. 'I

promise to love till death, etc.,' means as much as dgfh xvbp. Which has further implications.''

And after one has staggered through this gem, who should pop up again but Pound. Then Duncan, with another AT THE THROAT OF editorial. And then --- but what's the use.

It might interest you to know, though, that Saroyan is to join the chorus in the second issue of *The Townsman*. Isn't the literary world an exciting one!

PURPOSE (An English Quarterly, edited by W.T. Symons) Vol.x, Nos. 1 & 2

After the gibberish of *The Townsman* it is a relief indeed to come to *Purpose*. These two numbers, the Winter and Spring issues of 1938, are the first I have seen of this English quarterly. And I like it. Because even though *Purpose* tends to be clogged with *literary* works, with the dreary involutions and entanglements of analysis and criticism, such as are embodied in the Allen Tate essay of the Winter issue, or T. S. Eliot's in the Spring one, nevertheless its editor, W.T. Symons, seems to be struggling to extricate himself from the stagnant realm of literature and politics. In one of his editorials he writes:

''We live in a time so resonant with the cracking-up of outworn institutions, so tortured with the casting off of the old skin, that it seems less like the liberation of a new epoch than the crack of doom.''

And yet Symons staunchly believes in the coming of a new epoch, an epoch that has nothing to do with Fascism or Marxian Communism, and in his own fashion he is moving towards it. How splendid are these, his words:

"Man rests in his own integrity, and mounts like a star over the cataclysms of civilization. Everything feeds the solar fire with which he burns and glows."

A man who writes like this is worth listening to. At least for me he is. I know nothing of the *Social Credit* movement with which Symons has aligned himself. And without knowing anything of it, I find myself wary and suspicious. But towards the man himself, W. T. Symons, I feel a warm trust. Which is more than one can say about most editors to-day.

LIFE AND LETTERS TODAY (An English Quarterly)
Spring issue - 1938

This bulky magazine at first glance could easily be mistaken for a mail-order house catalogue, but a closer examination proves it to be no way near as interesting. Myself, I'd sooner take the spring issue of Sears Roebuck or Montgomery Ward any time.

"What is it that gives me the right to assume that my travellings in Mexico are a matter of interest to any one but myself and some long suffering friends?" asks Professor Hanns Sachs, Instructor in Psycho-Analysis at Harvard, as he starts off on his several pages of drivel titled *Mexico* in the Spring issue.

Well, I'm damned if I know what gives the professor the right. Except if it be the right of the stodgy editors of *Life and Letters*. For the professor is a bore, and what's more, he's a fatuous bore. But I suppose that's the undisputed right of an Instructor of Psychoanalysis.

Just listen. if you can stomach it, to the professor standing alongside the ruins of the temple of the Sun-

God, Quetzalcoatl, and pompously psycho-*anal*izing the ancient Mexicans:

"Now (for I've got to talk shop at least once upon a time) a psycho-analyst, facing these sights, cannot refrain --- even in seeing the methodical error of his ways --- from applying his knowledge of the dynamics of repression of the individual to groups and national units, from psychology to sociology. All these monuments reveal one trait in unusual strength and sharpness, the fixation to an anal-sadistic level..."

Anal-sadistic! Well, at least it describes the professor himself perfectly. For he's enough to give any one an anal-pain. And so is *Life and Letters*, for that matter. Here are the modest editors themselves, in their editorial section:

"We print the best authors from all countries."

The best! As if authors were merely different grades of cheese. Although I suppose most of them are, at that. But who's interested in the "best" of anything, whether it be authors or cheese? It's the *incomparable* author who really wins our recognition. And the incomparable piece of cheese too, for that matter.

But there's nothing incomparable in the Spring issue of *Life and Letters*. On the contrary, it's all drearily comparable to the "best" in a swarm of other contemporary magazines both in England and America.

POETRY (An American Poetry Monthly)
July 1938

The most noteworthy comment to be made on this precious little poets' haven is its gradual change from its former æsthetic lavender to a deepening Soviet pink. Of course it's still a blotchy job, with blobs of old

maids' purple in ludicrous juxtaposition with *Daily Worker* red, but patience, my dears, never mind the color scheme, just watch the circulation rise.

Not that there is anything astonishing about *Poetry* coquetting with the Soviet rah-rah boys, for after all the rah-rah boys are a well-behaved, decent lot, imbued with the noble spirit of '76, full of respect for the D.A.R., and ready to defend the glorious Democracy of the U.$. Yes indeed! the Soviet rah-rah boys are a respectable, upright crew. And they're so manly the way they valiantly defend democracy, not only in the U. $. but also in Spain, China, and Ethiopa, with their Underwoods and Royals. Really, to hear them bravely pecking away in the ambush of their studios, one might almost imagine one had stumbled upon a secret machine-gun nest. And it's so thrilling to appear in public with a crowd of them hurling their virile Jeffersonian à la Stalin challenges to all enemies of the U.$. Democracy.

Besides all this, there *is* the breath-taking possibility that *Poetry* may branch out from the scanty audience of "Poetry Nights","Poetry Societies" and all the Lovers-of-Poetry organizations, branch out and reach the vast audience of common men, the workers. Just think of it! Why the subscription list might then swell to the proportions of *Readers' Digest*, *Life*, or *True Story!* For "to have great poets there must be great audiences too." Whitman himself says so. And Archibald MacLeish says in the present July issue (and who would dare contradict Archy) that "poetry" is the "one deliverer of the people."

If only the people would realize, though. Really, they're so slow-witted and stupid at times. But just you wait. The virile influx of the new spirit of '76

poets in *Poetry* will turn the tide. Just listen to fearless Kenneth Fearing in the July issue, just listen to this, the closing stanza of his splendid poem titled *A Dollar's Worth of Blood, Please:*

SAY THE LAST WORD, YOU LONG STRAIGHT STREETS
SAY THE LAST WORD, YOU DUMB GUY, WISE GUY, FALL GUY, RIGHT GUY, SOFT GUY, TOUGH GUY,
SAY THE LAST WORD, YOU BLACK SKY ABOVE.

All in caps, too. So easy to read. And so you needn't be surprised when you start seeing longshoremen, steelworkers, miners, lumber-jacks, farmers, and cow-boys all reading *Poetry*.

THE EXAMINER (A new quarterly with Fascist leanings) Vol. 1, Nos. 1 and 2

Early in March we received the first issue of *The Examiner*, and in May the second issue arrived, but it was not until quite recently, here in June, that I finally conquered my aversion to the repellent physical appearance of this magazine --- its funereal slate-blue cover burdened with ugly, heavy type, and the irritating manner in which the clumsily stapled pages refused to lie open --- plus my sharp prejudice against the publication because of its Fascist nature, and began at last to read it.

The editor, Geoffrey Stone, leads off in No. 1 with a statement of the convictions which are to govern *The Examiner's* policies. And we read that: "Western civilization is in the midst of a crisis which cannot be

resolved except through an essential change in society.'' Immediately we prick up our ears. But our interest swiftly turns into disgust when we are informed that this ''essential change'' can be only one of two kinds: either a Marxian Communism which will ruin the works, or a Fascism which will save them by ''a re-invigoration of the institutions which, while now perverted from their original forms, are still the safeguards of such health as remains in the community.'' *Essential change!* What inane and hypocritical twaddle.

And as we read on it gets even worse. For we learn that the institutions to be ''re-invigorated'' are none other than the most stinking corpses in the tomb of Western civilization: Christianity, and the castrated kings of Christendom. And as a revelation of the ''essential change'' which the Fascists are accomplishing by their ''re-invigoration'' method, we are given the examples of Mussolini, Hitler, and Franco, those newly risen ghouls who are, Editor Stone assures us, ''secured in their office on the one hand *by the grace of God*, and on the other *by the loyalty of the people.*''!!!

Editor Stone then proceeds with the bland admission that this ''essential change'' and ''re-invigoration'' process is undeniably a nasty affair. ''Fascism'' he informs us ''is an unpleasant business, but so are most surgical operations. Unfortunately a surgical operation is becoming a matter of increasing urgency.'' Such is the manner in which this intellectual maggot explains the Fascists butcherings in China, Spain and Ethiopia. Surgical operation! Re-invigorations! What a boon it would be if someone would perform a thorough surgical operation on Editor Stone.

''It is far from *The Examiner's* intention'' he continues

"to offer the Fascist program as *wholly* suited to America; but since Fascism alone of present movements attempts a radical break with the forces that have produced our dilemma ..."

And to further persuade us to embrace a "re-invigoration", Editor Stone tells us that Fascism is not "all rubber truncheons and castor oil" and that "the lunatic fringe which attends it" is not "the best it has to offer intellectually."

After which he becomes quite hurt as he speaks of the enemies of Fascism. "The most active, and generally the best-concealed, agents in the attack" he complains "are two groups, international in scope, who have lost most from the advent of Fascism in Europe: the Jews and the Communists. The efforts of the former, when they are distinct from the latter, are *perhaps* forgivable in intention, though certainly not in results; but the purely destructive spirit in which the efforts of the Communists are made should find no toleration."

Well, enough of Editor Stone. He stinks to me. And although it is somewhat of a compensation to know that such creatures as he, whether they be Fascist or Communist, will eventually annihilate each other, nevertheless, rather than waiting, I'd much prefer to see this particular Stone tied to a big bundle of his *Examiners* and the both dropped into some deep cess-pool.

However, let's wait a moment, for in closing Editor Stone tells us that the contributors to *The Examiner* do not agree with all that is stated or implied in his preface.

And this hint proves to be astonishingly true, for immediately following we come upon a work by Eric Gill --- a chapter titled *Belief and Law* from his book

The Necessity of Belief. And this is truly a piece of courageous and honest writing, illuminated with flashes of passionate bitterness against the shame and degradation and evilness of modern society.

This is the first time I've come across any of Eric Gill's writings, and except for a vague recollection of a review D.H. Lawrence wrote of one of his books, along with having seen at various times his drawing of the Pegasus which adorns the cover of that for the most part innocuous and precious American magazine *Poetry*, I know nothing of the man. And so how he chances, nay, chooses --- for he appears again in the second issue of *The Examiner* --- to have his writings published in a magazine edited by a man like Geoffrey Stone, is beyond my understanding. Apart from this, though, he arouses my admiration.

As a writer he's inclined to be quite tedious and dull. Nevertheless, the *man* in him frequently blazes through the dull and clumsy style of his writings, and when this happens his writing becomes suddenly electrified and luminous, a deep contact and response is consummated.

In his chapter *Belief and Law*, he reveals himself to be a deeply religious man who believes in an innate hierarchy among men, a hierarchy comparable to a tree, with its roots, trunk, branches, leaves, and flowering, an organic hierarchy springing from the lowliest peasants of the fields and flowing upwards through skilled workers, artisans, artists, priests, chieftains, and kings. And just as a tree has a complete circle of communion with the Gods of the incarnate cosmos --- through its roots in the magical darkness of the earth and through its flowerings in the magical light of the

sun, the moon, and the stars --- so too would such a hierarchy of men as Eric Gill seeks be nourished and fulfilled. And in such a hierarchy there could be no conflicts arising out of oppression or exploitation or any of the ills of the blighted tree of modern society. For both king and peasant in such a hierarchy would be aware that their beings were nourished and sustained by the same vital flow of sap, and for either to disrupt the flow would be suicidal.

Meanwhile, though, men wander in desolation through to-day's blighted forest of races and nations. And there is no sustenance nor joy nor fulfillment for anyone, neither peasants nor kings. Indeed, there are no more genuine peasants and kings, there is only a sadly uprooted and opressed working class, a parasitical middle and upper class, and tyrants. The peasantry and artisans have been cruelly transplanted to factories and tenements, the vital flow has been defiled and broken, and modern nations can only bring forth such saprophytic creatures as Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, the Pope, Chamberlain, Daladier, Hoover, Roosevelt, etc.

Nevertheless, there are still men like Eric Gill scattered in various parts of the earth, men who carry within themselves the seeds of new hierarchies, and the time is again approaching --- I say this in the teeth of all opposition --- when these seeds shall take root and flourish. And then there shall be new kings and glory and joy and fulfillment among men. But until this time comes, we'll have to pull in our belts and continue our isolated, disconnected, anarchic lives as best we can, or else surrender our manhood and feed with the herds on the poisonous fungi of Fascism, Marxian Communism, Democracy, or Christianity.

Following Eric Gill's chapter in the first issue of *The Examiner* there comes an essay titled *The Poet and the Mystic*, by Professor Wallace Fowlie. And this is just a lot of high-flown crap. A few quotations, picked at random, should serve to give a clue to the Professor's message:

"Saint Theresa's words, 'Let me suffer or die', are a poignant testimonial to the mystic's new comprehension of and desire for suffering."

"The ineffability of rapture seems to be nothing more or less taan the ineffability of certitude, the unspeakableness of absolute liberty. The ravishment of Saint Paul to the third heaven and the ecstacies of Pascal are the attainment to Pure Spirit; even more than attainment, they are the welding of human spirit into Divine Spirit."

"Saint Martin's phrase, 'I heard flowers that sounded, and saw notes that shone', resembles the modern poetic credo."

"Jacopone consummates his death in singing. Love by which he is wounded is a delight and a death. He can only live without a heart. Jacopone played a definite part in the Franciscan movement of the thirteenth century which accentuated the humanity of Christ as the Divine Flower. The purity and suavity of this flower have a reflected counter-part in the poet himself. The humiliation of the Flower and its effulgent resurrection, the Flower pointing out its sweet-smelling flowers to the doubting disciple, all have a poetic validity ..."

Doesn't it all have a repulsive masochistic and eunuch-like quality? One can easily understand how this sort of emasculated Christian writing would na-

turally gravitate into the hands of Editor Stone. For it's no mere coincidence that Christianity and Fascism festered and broke forth from the same pustulous spot that harbored the Roman Empire. The virus of one is passed on to the next in an unbroken dynasty of evil. Thus, now that Christianity is dying as a world force, the Pope blesses Mussolini and Franco, his spiritual heirs and sons. Spiritual, because the Pope, of course, in keeping with the eunuch tradition of Christianity, cannot have carnal sons.

And very fitting it is that the high-priest of a death-religion, whose central god is worshipped because of his eunuch-like nature and his immaculate birth from a virgin, should have succeessors whose sexual degeneracy is so widely known that it has become the subject matter for a new crop of sickening jokes. Not that Hitler and Goering are very well-behaved and respectful sons, but sons they are, and they don't deny it. All one has to do is to turn to Section 24 of Hitler's National Socialist Party program and read: "The party is an exponent of a positive Christianity."

And the rampant sexual degeneracy among the Nazis and Fascists is nothing but the other side of the virgin-born eunuch ghastliness. A reappearance of the old, two-faced Roman god, Janus.

All of which may seem very remote from the subject at hand, but it really isn't. For if you admit --- as men have done in the past and as they shall do again --- that our sustenance and joy and fulfillment rests in the acknowledging and abiding by innate and organic hierarchies, then you must also admit that the nucleus of all hierarchies, the prime indivisible nucleus, is the family. Father, mother, and children. The atomic

hierarchy within all true hierarchies. With this in mind, then, look at the Holy Christian family --- the Virgin Mother, the father cuckolded by a Holy Ghost, and the eunuch-son. And what can grow out of this save what did --- men who have deliberately chosen the emasculation of priesthood, women who entered nunneries and denied their wombs. With the deceived and betrayed masses of men paying homage to these unclean, unnatural virgin priests and nuns. Imagine, if you can, a man who passes through his youth and maturity without ever going to bed with a woman; or a woman who has never gone to bed with a man. Imagine the inner state of a Pope or a priest or a nun. Is not the mere contemplation revolting! And yet these are the most revered creatures in Christian society. All in the name of purity and holiness and *godliness*. What sacrilege!

And now the inner corruption is revealing itself. Now come the new Christian leaders. The Janus-faced death-religion, with its deliberate masochism of saintly emasculation and nunneries, begins to show its other face, its cruel evil face of sadism, of "re-invigorations", "surgical operations", and a ghastly, undisguised sexual degeneracy.

But this examination of *The Examiner* begins to pall on me. So let's get the rest of it over with as quickly as possible.

The professor's essay is followed by a doctor's --- Dr. Meyrick Booth. And the doctor writes in the same style as one finds in the *Daily Worker* and *New Masses*, except that the doctor is on the Fascist side of the fence. His work is strewn with such jewels as "All is fair in love and war"... "The road to war is paved

with good intentions''... etc. etc. Altogether he's too banal to bother with. Let's skip him. Which brings us to another doctor --- Dr. Austin Warren, whom we are told, in notes about contributors, is a professor of English at Boston University. And here are a few choice tid-bits from the professor's potpourri, which is written in the classical Elbert Hubbard style:

''A sound resolve for any writer would be to essay no piece not its own reward by virtue of the fascination in solving a problem which has vexed him or by the delight which it gave him to contemplate --- and, so nearly as he could, to reproduce --- an object of delight and peace.''

''The master should never exert his full strength in performance.'' ... ''The wise man looks down at the earth with one eye and up to heaven with the other; yet his vision is single.''

''The line between wisdom and platitude must always remain a fine one.'' (Wouldn't the professor make an excellent tight-rope walker?)

''Even for a poor man, to buy books is easier than to read them; to read them, than to comprehend; to comprehend them, than to assimilate them, and all is easier than to correct and apply what one has found in them.''

So whatever way you look at it, the professor has a tough time of it. Let's leave the poor man to his troubles.

Which brings us to the final piece in *The Examiner*'s first issue --- an essay titled *Art and Inference*, by William FitzGerald. FitzGerald is not such a bad guy. Indeed, in many respects he's quite likeable. He's angry as hell against a lot of things, such as the way

New York and Hollywood dominate American culture; the way in which Americans fawn on Europe's cultural past; and the way in which Americans violated this continent in the ugly, greedy scramble out of which the U.$. of America arose. And in his anger he lands some good blows --- "... the newest (European) keyboard prodigy, tracked down and cornered after a tooth-and-claw struggle, who will resurrect for us certain neglected *etudes* of Chopin ... Vienna spewing up its annual crop of Freudian bigwigs, each destined for highly lucrative lecture tours, since the soul is the uncontested domain of the Viennese ... Manhattan music is the Met, where if you have the cash you can bid for seats to Puccinian olive oil, Wagnerian blubber --- the Met, you see, is strictly in the Manhattan swim, notorious for its hostility to native composers while on the other hand blundering repetitiously among the classics. *Tristan*, *Faust*, *Aida*, *Manon*, *Walkure* you will always hear; how often will you get *Don Giovanni* or *Boris Goudounov*? ... Manhattan music is also Virgil Thompson annotating the gibberish of Stein, Louis Gruenberg setting tom-toms to O'Neill, Deems Taylor embroidering the class-day pretties of Edna Millay, Stokowski nagging his superb band through the Shostakovich first symphony ... Woolcott is far from being Manhattan's private misfortune---with the co-operation of press, radio, and his sponsors of the moment, he is a *national* pestilence. Coast-to-coast networks relay his dulcet whimsies to steerhand and lumberjack, while his faithful Viking publishers laden the trade routes with omnibus potpourris of the arch fellow's more beloved literary gems ..."

But in the end, FitzGerald's diatribe comes to

nothing, for after he has finished his attack, he has nothing more to offer than a rallying and futile sounding call for Americans to turn their backs on Europe, Manhattan, and Hollywood, and start the building of a national culture of their own. And out of what is this new national U.S.A. culture to spring? What will nourish and sustain it? "A different sort of *political assertion* than we have at present," answers Fitz-Gerald. And in a muddled fashion, he vaguely hints that this *political assertion* must be of the Fascist variety

And so one comes to the close of the first issue of *The Examiner*. With the exception of Eric Gill, it all leaves a dreary, ashen taste in one's mouth. One is left thinking what a sad, ghastly mess men have made of their lives.

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